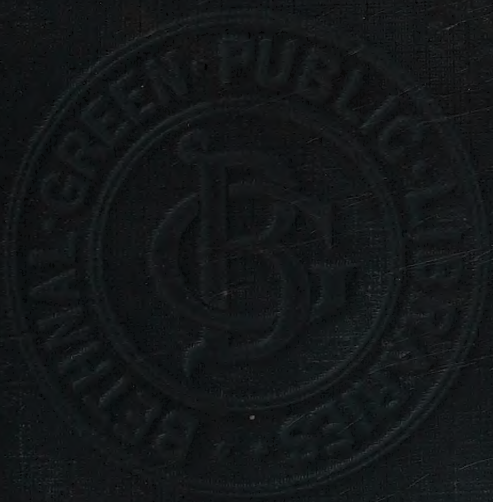
THE LIFE AND GOSPEL OF SHAKESPEARE

J. M. DITCHFIELD



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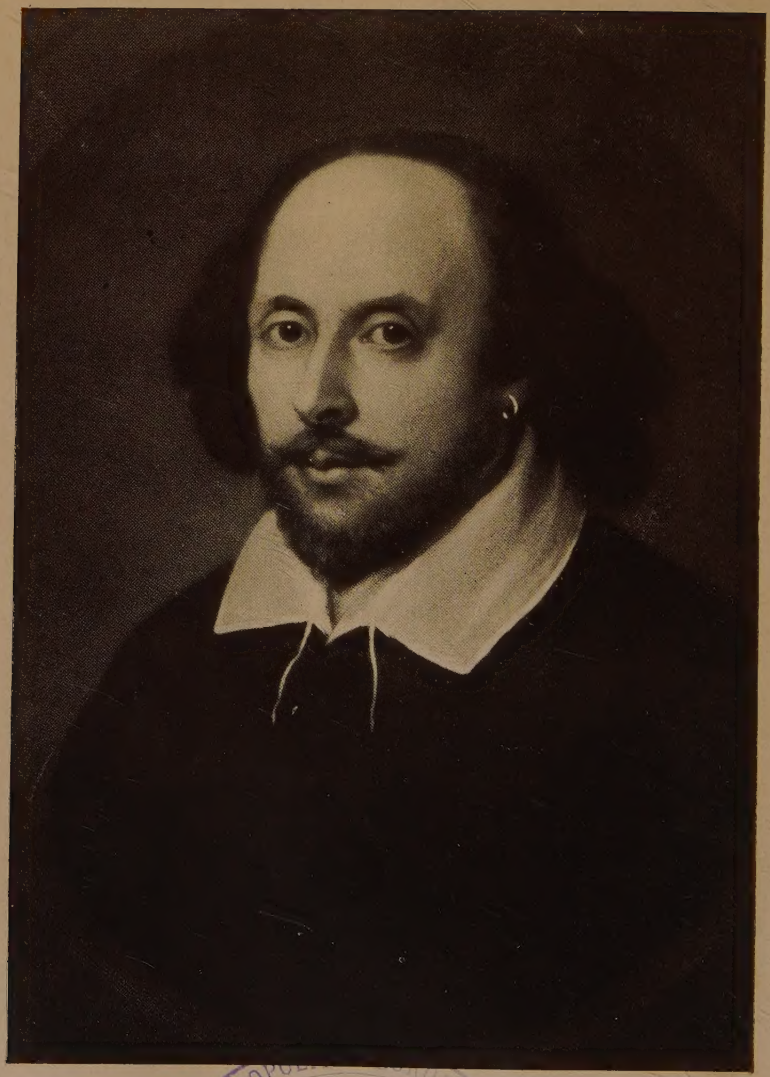

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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THE ENGLAND OF SHAKESPEARE

BY

P. H. DITCHFIELD

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AND TO ALL OLD ORIEL FRIENDS

WHO STILL HAVE ME

IN REMEMBRANCE

WITH KINDLY GREETINGS

I DEDICATE

THIS BOOK

PREFACE

SHAKESPEARE is known and read of all men, especially at the present time. He lived in what has been called a Great Age, and great it was in many ways which I have attempted to show in these pages. He reflects more than any one else the thought and spirit of that age. If we would understand his writings, his spirit, his humanity, it is necessary to know something about his times, the people he used to meet, the social customs that prevailed, the England he loved. He took a keen interest in the events of his period, and in the lives and characters of those who dwelt around him. He had great sympathy for ordinary common folk. He knew how "to suffer fools gladly." The stupidity of Dogberry and Verges, the swaggering of the swashbuckler, the sturdy yeoman and farmer, the merchant and the labourer, the ale-wife and the milkmaid, all interested him. He loved to draw out their old stories and to read their characters. He loved all animal creatures—the "hound of Spartan breed," the horse, the deer and hunted hare, his kind eye full of sympathy for the poor creature as it fought bravely

to save its life. He revelled in the happy life of a glorious day, clouded over as it often was by human passion and darkened by many a crime, and had a hope for every one and a smile for all.

The Elizabethan stage had no scenery, but if we would understand Shakespeare we must place him on his stage with proper fittings around him: now a courtly palace with a Tudor Queen who ably ruled her land and won her subjects' hearts; now we hear the disputings of rival religious factions. We enter busy London with him and contrast it with our own; we walk with him in the streets of Stratford, along the country roads, meet strange travellers and rogues and vagabonds, and watch the maidens dance around the May-Pole with their blithe companions. We go with him to Oxford and learn how men were taught in his day, and see him with his friends at the "Mermaid," or at Southwark and Paris Gardens, in the Playhouse and watch the beaux on their stools on the stage and the groundlings in the pit. Thus we get to know the man better, to understand him better.

I have tried to paint these Elizabethan and Jacobean scenes and the task has not been easy. There is no lack of material. Many have written about the period, but Shakespeare plays only a small part in such chronicles. I have tried to enlist the help of the poet himself who bears witness to the events and circumstances of his times. It would be difficult to name all the books I have consulted,

and perhaps it is not necessary to make a complete bibliography. There are many histories of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from Camden's Annals to Bishop Creighton's History. William Harrison's *A Description of England* (1577) has been of constant service, together with the notes published in the edition issued by the New Shakespearean Society in 1877, and Philip Stubbes's *The Anatomie of Abuses*, issued by the same Society; Hentzner's description of England (the copy used by me is in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries, and was issued by Horace Walpole at his Strawberry Hill Press), the works of Spenser, Ben Jonson, John Stow, Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, Joseph Hall's Satires, Busino, the Venetian Ambassador's account of his visit to England, Goadby's *England of Shakespeare*, *Social England*, and many other volumes. I desire to express my thanks to my old friend, Sir Theodore Andrea Cook, Editor of the *Field*, for kindly sending me some extracts from works of authors contemporary with the poet, which illustrate some of the characters of the period. An important and valuable work published by the Oxford University Press in two large volumes by a group of Oxford scholars and experts, about three dozen in number, entitled *Shakespeare's England*, appeared when the manuscript of this volume was nearly finished. I might bewail my fate in having so formidable a rival and competitor in the field before me. But if it stimulates a study

of the Shakespearean Age, it may lead its readers to peruse this lesser book, which may be compared to a cock-boat beside a galleon. At any rate this book is the production of one mind and will, of one who has for many years made the period his study, who shares with most of his countrymen an admiration of the works of our national poet, and who here inscribes this tribute to his memory.

P. H. DITCHFIELD

Barkham Rectory

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	PREFACE	vii
CHAPTER I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND	11
III.	RELIGION	38
IV.	THE COURT	65
V.	THE LONDON OF SHAKESPEARE	86
VI.	SHAKESPEARE'S HOME AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON	110
VII.	THE COUNTRY AROUND STRATFORD	125
VIII.	ROADS AND TRAVELLERS	137
IX.	SHAKESPEARE'S JOURNEY TO LONDON	146
X.	THE UNIVERSITIES	158
XI.	MANSIONS AND MANOR-HOUSES	167
XII.	THE NAVY AND ARMY OF ENGLAND	183
XIII.	AGRICULTURE AND TRADE	202
XIV.	LITERATURE	222
XV.	PLAYS AND PLAYERS	233
XVI.	SPORTS AND PASTIMES OF THE PEOPLE	250
XVII.	ELIZABETHAN COSTUME	271
XVIII.	THE POOR. ROGUES AND VAGABONDS AND PUNISHMENTS	280
XIX.	SUPERSTITION, ALCHEMY, ASTROLOGY	288
XX.	CONCLUSION	302
	INDEX	307

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE . . . *Frontispiece*

The Chandos Portrait, attributed to Richard Burbage or John Taylor in the National Portrait Gallery.

FACING PAGE

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, AND PREACHING AT PAUL'S CROSS 48

From a picture in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries, London.

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND HER COURT VISITING BLACKFRIARS, JUNE 16, 1600 66

From the painting of Marcus Gheerarts in the possession of the Earl of Ilchester at Melbury. (Photo, Augustin Rischgitz.)

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE, LONDON . . . 104

From an engraving by Hollar.

STRATFORD CHURCH 116

From a drawing by E. H. New.

THE SHAKESPEARE MONUMENT 122

From a drawing by E. H. New.

ANN HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE 134

From a drawing by E. H. New.

THE HALL, AUDLEY END 172

From an engraving in Nash's *Mansions of England*.

AN ELIZABETHAN GALLEON 184

From an old engraving.

*VIEW OF A STAGE TAKEN FROM KIRKMAN'S DROLLS (1672-3) 244

Showing much the same arrangements as those of the Elizabethan Drama.

*A HUNTING SCENE 252

From THE NOBLE ARTE OF VENERIA by Turbeville.

*SOME COSTUMES OF THE POET'S PERIOD . . 276

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INTRODUCTION

IT is fitting that in the year of grace one thousand nine hundred and sixteen, three hundred after the soul of England's greatest national poet passed away from earth, his countrymen should again crown him with their wreaths of laurel and unite in honouring his memory. But for the din of war and the world-wide clash of arms a greater and grander commemoration would have been possible. Foreign nations would have sent their tributes of praise and respectful homage to the poet's greatness. In no other country, besides our own, is Shakespeare more honoured than in Germany. I have met socially and on the lecture platform the distinguished German scholar, Professor Brandl, who three years ago lectured before the British Academy at Burlington House. Shakespeare was his hero, his unsurpassed poet, genius, dramatist and littérateur. In their affection and

appreciation of our national poet Germany and England were united by close ties which could never be severed. German scholars vied with our English professors in trying to solve the mysteries of his surpassing genius. The two nations were made akin by the influence exercised by the poet, an influence that would increase as the years passed on and produce peace and harmony between the German nation and our own.

The prophecy has been fearfully falsified. We should like to hear an expression of the Professor's views at the present time. Probably he has joined the pleasant company of other German writers, inebriated with their arrogance, who maintain that our poet has left his native shore and sought an asylum and an enduring home in the Fatherland. One of our greatest authorities on Shakespeare, Sir Sidney Lee, has well said, "We welcome the homage which Germany pays Shakespeare. We treat that homage as a tribute, in whatever spirit rendered, to poetic genius and power which are essentially English. The German homage to Shakespeare is an involuntary confession. There are lessons which Shakespeare can teach that the Germans have yet to learn, and we can wish nothing better for them and for ourselves than that they should supply the defect at an early date."

In spite of the strictures of Victor Hugo,[1] and the criticisms of George Pellissier, who contends that

[1] Prefaces of *Cromwell* and *Odes and Ballades*, 1826.

the poet, the *dieu du théâtre*, as he appears to most of his countrymen, was a very bad dramatist,[1] Shakespeare ever since the days of Louis XIV has found a welcome in France, and Voltaire sang his praises and sounded the trumpet of his fame in every European country.

But for the war we should have welcomed to our shores representatives, not only from France and Germany, but from every Colony and Dependency of the British Crown, where the poet is honoured quite as much as in the mother-land. Spain, too, would have been with us in spirit, as she is celebrating this year her great national poet and prose writer, Miguel de Cervantes, the immortal author of *Don Quixote*, who died exactly on the same day as Shakespeare, April 23rd, 1616. More happily situated than we are, she is able to do complete honour to her heroic poet, and King and Government and people are uniting to celebrate the occasion.

And then, there is America, who can claim an equal right with us by kinship with the poet to pay homage to the dead. It was during his life that the first steps were taken towards the settlement of those English colonies which at last became the United States of America. In Southwark Minster was baptized John Harvard, the son of Robert, the founder of Harvard College, which blossomed out in later times to the famous Harvard University, the great centre of learning in a Continent where a

[1] *Shakespeare et La Superstition Shakespearienne*, 1914.

few sea-board settlements then had a precarious existence on the edge of a land of savagery and forest. The wife of Robert Harvard, Katherine, the mother of the future founder, lived at Stratford-on-Avon in a house that is still standing. It is now called " Harvard House." Though its name is modern and it has been much restored, it is a fine old half-timbered residence, and was built by Katherine's father, Thomas Rogers, alderman of Stratford in 1596. Shakespeare saw it when it was newly built, and was a neighbour of the Harvards at Southwark, and doubtless often visited the Rogers' family at Stratford and Robert Harvard in his London home. It is not improbable that he knew the seven-year-old boy, John, who was destined to carry light and learning to the colony beyond the seas. The share of the United States of America in the fame of the poet, their national bard and ours, is very real.

If the English nation were not engaged in this stupendous struggle we should have welcomed representatives from all these countries, and concentrated our attention upon a worthy celebration of the Shakespeare Tercentenary. The present writer was for some years a member of the committee for promoting the national memorial of the poet. A theatre was to have been built, statues erected and much else accomplished in honour of the commemoration. These ambitious schemes have for the moment been abandoned. But the lovers of

Shakespeare were well advised to refuse to pass over the great event in silence; and though shorn of much of its magnificence, though State functions were of necessity circumscribed, not a few men and women of England have by a study of the great national poet's writings been braced to endure hardness, and by reflecting upon the achievements of the past been encouraged to face the future with a high courage and a determined step.

. . . . . .

One feature of Shakespeare's writings is his intense and ardent patriotism. In the great historical panorama of his plays again and again he displays his affection for his country, and in that he reflected the spirit of his age. The poet loved

> " that white-faced shore
> Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,
> And coops from other lands her islanders,
> Even till that England, hedged in with the main,
> That water-walled bulwark, still secure
> And confident from foreign purposes."[1]

Again in the same play (*King John*) he utters the proud defiance to England's foes:

> " This England never did (nor never shall)
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.
> . . . . . .
> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them: nought shall make us rue
> If England to itself do rest but true."[2]

[1] *King John*, Act II, scene 1.
[2] *Ibid.* Act V, scene 7.

Again and again he sounds the warning note, "England is safe, if true within herself," a warning that echoes on through all the ages of our country's history, and is no less needed now than at any other time of our national history.

"O England! model of thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart—
What mightst thou do, that honour would thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural!" [1]

Perhaps the passage that reveals most clearly the poet's ardent patriotism is that spoken by John of Gaunt on his deathbed, wherein he describes the true greatness and valour of England, but mourns over the degradation into which she had fallen under the rule of his foolish nephew, King Richard II. You will recall the words:

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-Paradise;
This fortress, built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world;
This precious stone set in a silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son

[1] *Henry V*, Act II, chorus.

This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leased out (I die pronouncing it)
Like to a tenement or pelting farm :
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds ;
That England that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself ;
O, would the scandal vanish with my life,
How happy then were my ensuing death."[1]

Shakespeare often refers to the sea that guards our island home. In the above passage he does and in several others, such as when Hastings speaks in the last act of the third part of *King Henry VI :*

" Let us be back'd with God and with the seas,
Which He hath given for fence impregnable,
And with their helps only defend ourselves ;
In them and in ourselves our safety lies."[2]

Even England's enemies are made to say,

" That island of England breeds very valiant creatures,"[3]

referring to her breed of mastiffs of unmatchable courage, with which the men sympathise and " eat like wolves and fight like devils."

How well they fought at Agincourt history tells and the play records, and every reader knows those lines of King Henry that he spake before the battle, glowing with a gallant courage, chivalry and high hope of victory. On the five hundredth anniversary

[1] *King Richard II*, Act II, scene 1.
[2] 3 *Henry VI*, Act IV, scene 1.
[3] *Henry V*, Act III, scene 7.

of the fight, which we celebrated during the progress of the present war, we recalled them :

" We few, we happy few, we band of brothers ;
For he, to-day, that sheds his blood with me,
Shall be my brother ; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition :
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here ;
And hold their manhoods cheap, while any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day." [1]

Shakespeare sent forth a burning message for all time of ardent patriotism and love of England. Is it not a strange coincidence that the anniversary of his death-day should be the Feast of St. George, England's patron saint, whose name was the battle-cry of our warriors on many a bloody field ? It was " our ancient word of courage, fair St. George,"[2] that inspired " our men with the spleen of fiery dragons." May we in the modern Armageddon sound forth the same encouraging cry (slightly modified) :

" God and St. George, England and victory."[3]

. . . . . .

The task I have set myself to perform is to examine England as it appeared in the days when Shakespeare lived. In studying his life and achievements it is absolutely necessary to know thoroughly the conditions of his age, the social forces that were at work, to visit the Court of the

[1] *Henry V*, Act IV, scene 3.
[2] *Richard III*, Act V, scene 3. [3] *Ibid.*

great Queen, make acquaintance with her crowd of statesmen, courtiers, gallant leaders like Drake, Gilbert, Raleigh, Grenville and the rest of the brave band of heroes, who defended England's shores when threatened with as formidable an array of hostile vessels as ever sought to enslave our English freedom. England was then alone fighting for her life. To-day she has powerful allies in a conflict still more fierce and gigantic; but there is a strange continuity running through history, of which I shall write more at length on a later page, and we have reason to hope that the same guarding sea, of which the poet speaks so often, may still prove a barrier to aggression and invasion.

These men of old, whose acquaintance we shall renew, loved to engage in wild adventures, to circumnavigate the globe, to hunt the Spanish treasure ships, to "singe the beard of the King of Spain," founding colonies for England, laying the foundations of England's Empire. We will walk together with the poet along the streets of old London, and go with him to the playhouse and to the "Mermaid" inn and meet the company of players. We will tramp with him in his early days from Stratford to London, "pass the time o' day" with the people whom we meet upon the road. We shall try to paint a picture of the England of the poet's period, the scenes upon which his gentle brown eyes rested, the kind of buildings and their surroundings existing in his time, the stately palaces, the picturesque

manor houses and the humble dwellings of the poor that studded the country-side when he wrote his immortal plays.

Every person is in some way influenced by his environment, even a poet who creates. His imagination peoples the world with characters that exist only in his fancy, it is true; but he is dependent upon what he sees and hears, upon the age in which he lives and upon the tone and temper of that age. If we would know the real man intimately and as a friend, we must place him amidst his accustomed surroundings; and if we would understand the life, work and character of Shakespeare we must try to place him in his Elizabethan setting, to cast our thoughts back three hundred years and more and to live in his time and know the manners of his age. Students of his works, Shakespearean scholars, who can analyse each play and who revel in the perplexing meanings of divers words and passages, in his allusions and problems of language, in his sources of knowledge and the origins of his plays, in divers readings and such-like questions, may scorn this humbler task. But it is no less important and presents features of absorbing interest both for the student and the general reader. The jewel gleams in the sunlight, but its setting adds to its beauty and is not unimportant.

II

SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

THERE is a natural love and fondness in Englishmen for whatever was done in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. We paint the England of that day in vivid and perhaps too glaring colours. We look back upon it as the time of a golden age, and on the great men who lived in it as our chiefest heroes and the greatest examples of wisdom, courage, integrity and learning. It was a time when England first began to feel her greatness, when the warm life-blood of freedom coursed through her veins, and when she cast off the shackles that encumbered her, and she was free. It was, indeed, a wonderful age, a time when valour, energy and genius reached a pitch that has never been excelled. It is true that it had not a monopoly of these virtues :

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi

and after him, too, they have lived and worked and fought for their native land ; but the Elizabethans had the advantage of the quickening of all impulses warlike and intellectual, given by the opening of the

New World, by the enlargement of ideas and ideals, by the assurance of the expansion of the destinies of the race, and of the possibilities of advancing greatness and power that dawned upon the heart of every patriot.

From a thinly populated country, torn and rent by internal dissensions, eyed with covetous glances by both France and Spain, who were like two dogs waiting to seize a bone, England rose to be one of the Great Powers of Western Europe, a position she has never relinquished. She had passed through an age of long-standing Civil War, through years of reckless tyranny. She had seen her mighty lords die in scores upon the scaffold. The fires of religious persecution at Smithfield, Oxford, Gloucester, had scarcely died down, wherein many a lowly soul and beloved divine had breathed their last in direst agony for the sake of the faith they venerated, for the God they worshipped. And now the terror had passed like a hideous dream, and England awoke to find herself free, free to work out her own destinies, and free to develop her powers.

Amidst all the unfolding of the scenes of the new era the Queen herself holds the stage. On a later page I shall endeavour to paint her portrait and sketch her strange and complex character, her strength, her weaknesses, her diplomacy, her meanness, her lack of scruples, her masculine mind, her frivolity, her power of winning and holding the affections of her subjects, and her devoted love of

England that shone forth through all the mists that perplex the painter and obscure the vision of the Virgin Queen. The poets sang her praises. Spenser dedicated his immortal *Faerie Queene* to the " most high, mighty and magnificent Empress, renowned for piety, virtue and all gracious government, Elizabeth . . . to live with the eternity of her fame " ; and he pours forth his melodious verse to her :

> " O Goddess, heavenly bright,
> Mirror of grace and majesty divine,
> Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
> Like Phœbus' lamp throughout the world doth shine."

The Faerie Queen was " the most excellent and glorious person of our Sovereign the Queen and her Kingdom is Faerie Land, and as a most virtuous and beautiful Lady I do express her as Belphœbe."

Twice only does Shakespeare praise his Queen, once when he presents her under the simile of a vestal in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[1] Oberon says he saw

> " Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
> Cupid all arm'd a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal throned by the west :
> And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts :
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon :
> And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
> In maiden meditation fancy free."

[1] Act II, scene 2.

The other allusion is in *Henry VIII*, when as an infant she is christened, and Cranmer acts the part of seer and foretells the future greatness of the child:

"This royal infant (Heaven still move about her!)
Though in her cradle, yet now promises
Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings,
Which time shall bring to ripeness: She shall be
(But few now living can behold that goodness)
A pattern to all princes living with her,
And all that shall succeed: Sheba was never
More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue
Than this pure soul shall be: all princely graces,
That mould up such a mighty prince as this is,
With all the virtues that attend the good,
Shall still be doubled on her: truth shall mourn her;
She shall be lov'd and fear'd: Her own shall bless her:
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
And hang their heads with sorrow: Good grows with her:
In her days, every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine, what he plants; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours;
God shall be truly known; and those about her
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.

. . . . . .

She shall be, to the happiness of England,
An aged princess; many days shall see her,
And yet no day without a deed to crown her.
Would I had known no more! Yet she must die,
She must, the saints must have her; yet a virgin,
A most unspotted lily, shall she pass
To the ground, and all the world shall mourn her."

A mighty panegyric truly! And most of the poets sang in the same strain. John Davis, in his

Hymns of Astrea, wrote a long acrostic poem, the initial letters of each verse forming the words "Elizabetha Regina," and each line contains a eulogy. As to the greatness of the times in which she lived there were, and are still, some who take a pessimistic view. Mr. Hubert Hall, the learned student of the Elizabethan State Papers, who speaks with much authority, declares that "the state of society was the worst that had ever before been in the land."[1] Mr. Harold Bayley asserts that "the current impression that the spacious times of great Elizabeth were a period of high moral and intellectual development is not endorsed by history nor is it deductible from the evidence of men who were then living,"[2] and that they were entirely blind to the alleged grace and intellectuality of their surroundings.

Drayton was a pessimistic painter of the state of England in his day. Writing to George Sandys and William Jeffreys he laments over the degeneracy of his country, and compares the English to "the stiff-necked Jews" who did "their noble prophets utterly refuse." He thought:

> "This very age wherein we two now live
> Shall in the compass wound the Muses more
> Than all the old English ignorance before."

[1] *Society in the Elizabethan Age.*

[2] *The Shakespeare Symphony, An Introduction to the Ethics of the Elizabethan Drama.*

Against learning, ignorance stood

> "Like some dull porter at a Palace gate;
> So dull and barbarous lately are we grown
> That for man's knowledge it enough doth make
> If he can learn to read an almanack."

He alludes to his era as

> "These feverish dog-days, blest by no record
> But to be everlastingly abhorred."

Describing the state of poetry in "our woful England" he says

> "The Muses here sit sad . . .
> What canst thou hope or look for from his pen
> Who lives with beasts though in the shape of men."

He inveighs against the ignorance and vice of the people, and must have been reading the diatribes of Philip Stubbes. Doubtless there was plenty of both, but England had just begun to renew its youth, and was guilty of the errors of youth, its heedlessness, thoughtlessness and carelessness; yet we must not forget its manly virtues, its courage, its power of achievement. Drayton's whining about the Muses reads like the jealous moanings of a disappointed poet who had been eclipsed by more powerfully inspired rivals.

Of courtiers and the Court I shall write in another chapter of this book. The Queen was well served by her counsellors and advisers, Burleigh, Walsingham, Archbishop Parker and the rest, though she had the spirit of the Tudors strongly developed, and hesitated not to pursue her own course and be guided

by her own judgment in difficult affairs of policy. Of the morals and character of many members of her Court, such as Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and his crew, the least said the better. Later on I shall try to write something of Court Society, which rendered to the Queen subservient homage. Not even the greatest favourite dared to thwart her will. Many strove to ingratiate themselves with powerful Ministers of State in the hope of gain, a grant of escheated land or tithe, a lucrative post, "a dissolved monastery, or some other spoil of blood or sacrilege for which they watched patiently as a dog watches for the tossed bone. Their names may be found in nearly every parliament of the reign—with those of lawyers, monopolists and usurers, the rising generations of county magnates—and on nearly every local page of the State Papers."[1]

The rise of a new class of squires in Elizabethan times is noted by many contemporary writers, and forms a special feature of the age. The old feudalism was dead, and Harrison writes scornfully of these "new gentlemen." Any one who studied the laws of the realm, abiding in the University, giving his mind to his books or professed physic and the liberal sciences, or became a captain in the wars, or benefited the commonwealth by good counsel given at home, living without manual labour, and able to bear the charges of a gentleman, could for money have a coat of arms bestowed upon him by

[1] *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, Hubert Hall, F.S.A., p. 15.

heralds (who in their charter did of custom pretend antiquity and service and many gay things and thus make good profit)—any one so distinguished could be called " Master," the title of esquires and gentlemen, and be reputed a gentleman ever after. It is all of no consequence, Harrison concludes. The sovereign loses nothing. If " the gentleman " be called to the wars he pays for his own outfit. His title hurts no one but himself, who perhaps will go in wider buskins than his legs will bear, or as the proverb says, now and then bear a bigger sail than his boat is able to carry.

A notable change in the manners of Englishmen was that in reference to foreign travel. Hitherto we had been rather a stay-at-home race. Our ideas were insular and foreign countries were unknown ; but now it became the fashion for noblemen and gentlemen to send their sons abroad for the completion of their education in spite of the strictures of the moralists who declared that those who went to Italy brought home nothing but atheism, vice and pride. Ascham says that the " Court of Circe " corrupted men's minds and morals. " I know divers that went out of England, men of innocent life, men of excellent learning, who returned out of Italy, not only with worse manners, but also with less learning." The influence of " fond " books translated out of Italian into English and sold in every shop in London, also " beguiled simple and innocent wits." Some of the opinions

learnt in Italy were " Keep faith only when you'll not lose by it " ; " Forgive only when you are fully revenged " ; " He is a fool that maketh account of any religion, but more fool that will lose any part of his wealth, or get into trouble for leaning to any ; but if he should die for his faith, he is stark mad and the worse fool of all." Such were they who, according to Harrison and others, had become the loathed thing, an " Italianised Englishman."

However, travelling was the vogue amongst the young men of the day. Sir Henry Unton, as a young man, made the " grand tour," and travelled in Venetian territory, carrying an umbrella, preceded by a servant blowing a horn. In the National Portrait Gallery there is a series of pictures in one group depicting various scenes in his career, at Oxford, travelling, in the wars in the Low Country, his marriage feast and his funeral. There is no scene representing his stout conduct when he was acting as an Ambassador to the King of France in 1592. In his presence the Duke of Guise ventured to speak slanderously of the Queen of England. Sir Henry Unton immediately took up the challenge saying that whoever spake in such terms of his royal mistress " shamefully and slanderously lied." Shakespeare often alludes to the desire of youth : " To see the wonders of the world abroad."[1] Bacon advised it as a part of the proper education of a gentleman. Thomas Hoby, of Bisham Abbey, Berkshire,

[1] *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act I, scene i.

after leaving Cambridge without taking a degree, travelled abroad, in order to study foreign languages with a view to enter the diplomatic service. He wrote an account of his *Travaile and Lief*, recording his journeys to Germany, Venice, Padua, Naples, Sicily, France, Spain and elsewhere, and gives descriptions of the cities and towns he visited. He copied epitaphs, described the medicinal qualities of the waters of the Bath of Juno at Caldiero, near Verona, and added notes on the political affairs of the various countries. This book is an admirable sixteenth-century guide-book, as well as a work of considerable value. He also translated Count Castiglione's book, *Il Cortegiano* (the Courtier), and this translation won an assured place amongst the books of the Elizabethan period, and as its latest editor states, though Thomas Hoby's knowledge of the language was far from perfect, his work was " the book of a great age, the age that made Shakespeare possible." Many other young Englishmen followed in his footsteps, and wandered further afield, even to Vienna, Denmark and Poland, while many travelled with tutors and acquired learning by studying in the ancient Universities of France and Italy. Sometimes the travelled youth escaped not the sarcasm of the stay-at-homes, as they " put on airs," lisped in foreign accents, and like some moderns preferred every country to their own. Rosalind twitted such persons in the character of the melancholy Jaques, when she said :

"Farewell monsieur Traveller; look you lisp, and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you the countenance you are; or I will scarce think you have swum in a gondola."

Of the state of Religion, the strife between the Church against Papist and Puritan I have treated in another place, and also of many other features of the England that the poet knew. We shall watch the builders working, rearing great houses and mansions, and the smaller manor houses which are the gems of our English domestic architecture. All the signs of growing wealth were evident.

In the City stood the noble houses of the prosperous merchants who were making great fortunes. Such an one does our poet describe in the *Merchant of Venice:*

> "Believe me, Sir, had I such venture forth,
> The better part of my affections would
> Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
> Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind;
> Peering in maps for ports, and piers and roads;
> And every object that might make me fear
> Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
> Would make me sad."

They had built up a great trade with foreign lands. They exported broad cloth, cottons, friezes, rugs, tin, wool, the best beer, bales, bustian, mockadoes tufted and plain, lead, etc., which were sent to all parts of the world, and there either exchanged for other wares or for money. They were not content

with their old European trade, but sent their vessels to the East and West Indies, to the Canaries and New Spain, and even to China, Muscovy, Tartary and other far-off countries, bringing home cargoes of curious merchandise. Some of their voyages Harrison styles "suspicious," perhaps he meant piratical; perhaps he alludes to the slave trade which had begun its evil course. He liked not the merchants overmuch, and thought that too many of them, and of lawyers, injured the country by keeping up prices. When foreign ships brought their wares into England sugar was only fourpence a pound; it had risen on account of these middlemen to half a crown; raisins had risen from a penny to eightpence or tenpence a pound, and other commodities in a like manner. In spite of these strictures of the honest parson the merchants brought great wealth into England, and were of immense service to the sovereign. There was Sir Paul Pindar, the front of whose house is now in the South Kensington Museum, the wealthiest of the City merchants who flourished in the time of James I, lent the sovereign great sums of money, and when he died the Crown owed him £300,000.[1]

Near his house stood Crosby Hall, the home of Sir John Spencer, a typical Elizabethan merchant who owned Canonbury, and who had a fair and beauteous daughter who was carried off in a baker's basket by a young courtier, William, Lord Compton. Spencer

[1] I have told his story in *London Survivals*, p. 206.

disinherited his daughter, and the young couple were left in poverty. I may tell the rest of the story as it reveals the good-natured character of the Queen. A child was born. Elizabeth offered to be godmother and asked Sir John to be sponsor to an infant in whom she was much interested. Sir John felt flattered by the royal invitation, little knowing whose child it was, consented willingly, and then, of course, at the christening by the intercession of the Queen the dispute ended and the rebellious daughter was forgiven.

The greatest of all the merchants of the period was Sir Thomas Gresham, whose career has been minutely inspected by Mr. Hubert Hall, who has examined his account books and made them tell a not always creditable story. He was the founder of the Royal Exchange and the most financially successful of all his compeers in an age unparalleled for its money-making activity.

"The great master of exchange, the useful agent of the Crown, the financial adviser of ministers, the oracle of the City, the merchant prince, patron, and benefactor, becomes also, in his inevitable relations to the age in which he lived, an usurer, the son and nephew of usurers; a monopolist, the nominee of corrupt courtiers, and the associate of thievish contractors; and a landlord, the son, nephew, cousin, husband of a name as foul as any in the annals of oppression, eviction and plunder."[1]

[1] *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, by H. Hall, F.S.A.

That is a terrible indictment, and we are glad to note the following qualification: "Yet if he were of these he was not like unto them; and higher praise than this can be awarded to no distinguished Englishman of the latter half of the 16th century."

The fact is that Mr. Hall discovered some very damaging defects in Sir Thomas's accounts, which nearly landed him in very serious difficulties with the Government. It is true that his services were of immense value to the State, and he was much honoured and respected by his contemporaries. For the ill-doings of his wife and his relatives he was not responsible. His dishonesty, discovered by Mr. Hall, cannot be excused. The race for wealth and luxury was characteristic of the age, and Gresham, the founder of the Exchange, the great benefactor of the City, was not immune from the temptations that surrounded him. Nicholas Breton gives a good account of a City merchant. He wrote:

"A worthy merchant is the heir of adventure, whose hopes hang much upon the wind. Upon a wooden horse he rides through the world, and in a merry gale he makes a path through the seas. He is a discoverer of countries and a finder out of commodities, resolute in his attempts and royal in his expenses. He is the life of traffic and the maintainer of trade, the sailor's master and the soldier's friend. He is the exercise of the Exchange, the honour of credit, the observation of time and the understanding of

thrift. His study is number, his care is his accounts, his comfort his conscience, and his wealth his good name. He fears not Scylla and sails close by Charybdis, and having beaten out a storm, rides at rest in a harbour. By his sea gain he finds his land purchase, and by the knowledge of trade finds the key of treasure. . . . He plants the earth with foreign fruits, and knows at home what is good abroad. He is neat in apparel, modest in demeanour, dainty in diet and civil in his carriage. In sum he is the pillar of a city, the enricher of a country, the furnisher of a court and the worthy servant of a King."[1]

The rise of the yeoman in social importance was a feature of the country life, a noble class of men, the backbone of England, who, as Harrison says, in time past made all France afraid. They were, and are, respected in their neighbourhood, though agricultural depression has in these days almost deprived them of their lands. They were farmers of their own holdings, and in Elizabethan times they throve and increased their gains. They often farmed, also, the squires' lands, grazed cattle, frequented the markets, kept servants, were shrewd and clever, and became rich. They often bought up the properties of poor and unthrifty gentlemen, sent their sons to the University and the Inns of Court, and made them gentlemen. We hope to renew our acquaintance with this stalwart and honourable class of Englishmen later on.

[1] *The Good and the Badde*, 1616.

Of the change in agricultural life that occurred in Elizabeth's reign there is much to be said. The sheep with its rich fleeces had given way to corn and wheat and barley; but English wool was still wanted, and the shepherd had not abdicated or relinquished his functions. He had his portrait painted by the master-hand of Shakespeare. In *As You Like It*,[1] Corin says:

"Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men s good, content with my harm; and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck."

A contemporary writer, John Stephens, in *Essayes and Characters* (1615), thus describes him:

"An honest shepherd is a man that well verifies the Latin piece, *qui bene latuit bene vixit:* he lives well that lives retired: for he is always thought the most innocent because he is least public: and certainly I cannot well resolve you whether his sheep or he be more innocent. Give him fat lambs and fair weather, and he knows no happiness beyond them. He shows, most fitly among all professions, that nature is contented with a little. For the sweet fountain is his fairest alehouse: the sunny bank his best chamber. Adam had never less need of neighbours' friendship; nor was at any time troubled with neighbours' envy less than he: the next grove or thicket will defend him from a shower:

[1] Act III, scene 2.

and if they be not so favourable, his homely palace is not far distant. He proves quietness to be best contentment, and that there is no quietness like a certain rest. His flock affords him his whole raiment, outside and linings, cloth and leather; and instead of much costly linen, his little garden yields hemp enough to make his lockram shirts: which do preserve his body sweetened against court-itch and poxes, as a sear-cloth sweetens carcases. He gives the just epitome of a contented man: for he is neither daunted with lightning and thunder, nor overjoyed with spring-time and harvest. His daily life is a delightful work, whatsoever the work be; whether to mend his garments, cure a diseased sheep, instruct his dog, or change pastures: and these be pleasant actions, because voluntary, patient, not interrupted. He comprehends the true pattern of a moderate wise man: for as a shepherd, so a moderate man hath the supremacy over his thoughts and passions: neither hath he any affection of so wild a nature, but he can bring it into good order, with an easy whistle. The worst temptation of his idleness teaches him no further mischief, than to love entirely some nut-brown milk-maid, or hunt the squirrel, or make his cosset wanton. He may turn many rare esteemed physicians into shame and blushing: for whereas they, with infinite compounds and fair promises, do carry men to death the furthest way about; he with a few simples preserves himself and family to the most lengthened sufferance of nature. Tar and honey be his mithridates and syrups; the which, together with a Christmas carol, defend his desolate life from cares and melancholy. With little

knowledge and a simple faith, he purifies his honest soul, in the same manner as he can wash his body in an obscure fountain, better than in the wide ocean. When he seems lazy and void of action, I dare approve his harmless negligence, rather than many approved men's diligence. Briefly he is the perfect allegory of a most blessed governor : and he that will pursue the trope's invention, may make this character a volume."

There was much lawlessness in England during Elizabeth's reign. Street quarrels between rival factions were common. London apprentices waged war against each other, and the shout of " Clubs ! Clubs ! " soon created a concourse of riotous youths who fought fiercely, Salters *v.* Skinners, or Merchant Taylors *v.* Haberdashers. Contarini, the Italian ambassador, in recounting his adventures in London, states :

" You will see to two things, that is to say, to the great devils and the little devils. By the great ones I mean the waggons, which when they meet the coaches of the gentry, refuse to give way and yield as due. The little devils are the apprentices, alias shop boys, who on two days in the year, which prove fatal to them, Shrove Tuesday and the first of May, are so riotous and outrageous, that in a body three or four thousand strong, they go committing excesses in every direction, killing human beings and demolishing houses," etc.

They had a very successful day on Shrove Tuesday in 1617 when they and other riotous persons

assembled in Lincoln's Inn Fields, Finsbury field, Ratcliffe and Stepney and beat down the walls of many victualling houses suspected of being disorderly, spoiled a new Play-house, and resisted the Sheriffs of London and the Constables and Justices of Middlesex. They seem to have well earned their title on that occasion.

The gentlemen of the day were always eager to fight duels and were skilled in the art of fence. In every town there were professors who had fencing schools, instructing the youths in the noble art of self-defence. Our old English style of fighting was with sword and buckler, but these weapons gave place in Shakespeare's time to the rapier and dagger, which became fashionable. The poet often alludes to them.

"I have heard the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier," occurs in the *Merry Wives of Windsor;* and in *Love's Labour's Lost* there is the proud boast, "I do excel thee in my rapier, as much as thou didst me in carrying gates." Anacronisms are not unusual in our poet's works, and it is not altogether surprising that he makes use of this weapon in his *Richard II* long before it had been invented. In *Hamlet* there is the fencing scene where the fight is fought with foils, one of which was "unbated," i.e. it had no button at the end; and there are constant allusions in the Plays, either metaphorically or literally, to the art of fence, of which there were two schools, the Spanish and the Italian. Saviolo

was the great professor of the latter, which had the greater vogue. Thither young gallants flocked to learn Bobadill's " special rules, as your punto, your reverso, your stoccata, your imbroccato, your passada, your montanto."

This worthy is the " hero " in Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, a typical swashbuckler, a tavern-swordsman, such as he, described in *Romeo and Juliet*, who flings down his sword on the table, saying, " ' God send me no need of thee,' and by the operation of the second cup, draws it on the drawer, when indeed there is no need." Mercutio is described by Tybalt in the same play thus :

" He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance and proportion ; rests on his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom ; the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist."

You will remember the proud boastings of Bobadill, his reputed skill with his weapon, how he was attacked by three or four or six at Turnbull, Whitechapel, Shoreditch and upon the Exchange and defeated them ; and yet Downright comes along and beats the " bragging rascal " who dare not draw his weapon.

The tavern-knight, of whom Falstaff was a fair example, kept sorry company, and the tallow candles shed a hideous light on the rush-covered floor, strewn with overthrown mugs and patches

of spilt wine or beer and broken victuals, a table with empty bottles and tankards, while the company sang lively songs, uttered quarrelsome oaths, and loud shouts, and ever and anon the clink of a sword or the sharp hissing of rapiers marked the beginning of a quarrel, when pewter pots or their contents were thrown, and hoarse cries and savage oaths sounded through the tavern. "A word and a blow" was the motto of these fiery Elizabethans.

All through the country it was the same. Men fought with knives and daggers and swords and staves and pikes, and the results were fatal, as the records show. Armed violence was very common, and there was no county free from these homicidal attacks. Lawlessness was in the air. There is a curious instance in the records of Castle Comb, in Wilts, with regard to the brewing of beer and the prices at which it was sold. Very strict regulations were framed by the Court in 1577 and 1588, which I need not particularise. Subsequently it was the duty of the tithing-man to report that "the ale-wyves (the keepers of the ale-houses) had broken all the orders of the last law-day." The court appears to have received the presentment in silence, and made no order. The despair of the tithing-man may be imagined, as well as the triumph of the fair delinquents. We cannot help seeing them in high-crowned hats, with arms akimbo, making mouths at the court and jury sworn, and laughing

outright at the tithing-man and the rest of creation.

Prosecutions for unlawful games were frequent. Those indulged in were nine-holes, rushe and bowls. In 1576 in the same town four card-players (luserunt apud cartas pictas, videlicet kuffe) were fined vi^{s} viii^{d}, which, however, was mitigated to xii^{d}. Offenders who played "nyne-holes" were fined xii^{d}; those at bowles (apud globas) 11^{d}. Some daring offenders played shift-groate on Sundays, "ad malum exemplum aliorum," and so bad was the example that several were presented a little later for habitually playing cards (usi sunt ludere) on Sundays.

You may like to know the menu and the cost of food of a young squire, Wild Darrell by name, when he came to London and stayed at Warwick Lane in 1589. His accounts have been carefully preserved, and I will only mention the items for one day:

Wednesdy dyner April 16

A pece of bief	xviiii^{d}
A legg of mutton	xx^{d}
ii chickens and bacon . . .	xx^{d}
ii chickens and ii pigions . .	xviiii^{d}
For dressing all	vii^{d}
For parsly, cloves and sauce for the mutton	vi^{d}
Bread and beare	xvi^{d}
	0 8 9

Supper eodem

A shoulder of mutton . . .	xx^{d}
iii pigions	viii^{d}
For roastinge the mutton, pigions, ii chickens and ii rabbettes . .	xi^{d}
For sawse, soppes and parsley . .	v^{d}
Bread and beare	xiiii^{d}
	0 4 10

He evidently observed the fast on Friday when his expenses were as follows :

For dressing of fishe and butter .	xxii^{d}
For cheese	iiii^{d}
	0 2 2[1]

He certainly indulged in smoking, as we find among "sundries," "¼ oz of tobacco 10^{d} ; an ounce of tobacco 5^{s} ; four tobacco pipes 2^{s}." Smoking came greatly into fashion in Elizabethan times, though Shakespeare never mentions tobacco. His contemporaries, however, abundantly made up for this omission, and reveal the almost universal practice of the habit. I will not discuss the question as to who smoked the first pipe in England, but it seems fairly certain that it was not Sir Walter Raleigh. We have the testimony of Harrison that in 1673 " the taking in of the smoke of the Indian herbe called Tobacco, by an instrument formed like a little ladell, whereby it passeth from the mouth

[1] *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, p. 212.

into the head and stomach, is greatly taken up and used in England." The prevalence of smoking was a new feature of Elizabethan Society. All classes indulged in it—peers and squires, parsons and peasants. In the *Alchemist* we make the acquaintance of Abel Drugger, "a seller of tobacco," who comes to Subtle, a charlatan, to ask from this professor of astrology how he had best plan his new shop, and Face introduces him, and incidentally to us the tricks of tobacco-sellers :

> "Here is my friend, Abel, an honest fellow ;
> He lets me have good tobacco, and he does not
> Sophisticate it with sack-lees or oil,
> Nor washes it in muscadel and grains,
> Nor buries it in gravel underground,
> Wrapp'd up in greasy leather, . . .
> But keeps it in fine lily pots, that, open'd,
> Smell like conserve of roses, or French beans.
> He has his maple block, his silver tongs,
> Winchester pipes, and fire of Jupiter ;
> A neat, spruce, honest fellow, and no goldsmith."

Here we have the whole outfit of the smoker. The maple blocks were for the cutting or shredding the tobacco upon them ; the fire of Jupiter was juniper wood charcoal fire, and with the silver tongs the tobacconist lighted his customer's pipe.

Smoking did not escape the attention of Hentzner, the German traveller, to whose observations on our manners and customs I shall often refer. He noticed its prevalence in the theatres, but "everywhere else," he says, "the English are constantly smoking tobacco. They have pipes on purpose, made of

clay, into the further end of which they put the herb, so dry that it may be rubbed into powder; and putting fire to it, they draw the smoke into their mouths, which they puff out again through their nostrils, like funnels, along with plenty of phlegm and defluxions from the head." Does this mean that these early smokers were in the objectionable habit of spitting?

The swashbuckler Bobadil boasted about his tobacco quite as much as he did about his swordsmanship, and with equal truth. He says that he smoked seven pounds in eight days, and that his was the best tobacco in the world, Trinidado, that when he was in the West Indies he had lived on nothing else for twenty-one weeks, that tobacco cured all the ills of life. In the theatre the young fops were to be seen sitting on stools upon the stage, each one having his smoking tools with him, and puffing away so that they must have made Rosalind and Ophelia cough in the midst of their most beautiful lines; but you will understand that they were youths and had perhaps grown accustomed to the fragrant weed. And all the rest of the audience smoked also. "By this vapour" was a favourite oath. The fop, or rather the child imitating him in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, sitting on his stool at the theatre with his three sorts of tobacco and his light, scoffs at the play, the music, the poets, and says, "By this vapour—an't were for tobacco—I think—the very smell of them would

poison me, I should not dare to come in at their gates. A man were better visit fifteen jails—or a dozen or two hospitals—than once adventure to come near them."

James I could not endure smoking, and issued his famous "Counterblaste to Tobacco" without decreasing its consumption. Barnaby Rich wrote a satire on "The Honestie of this Age" (1614), and states that tobacco was sold in all taverns, inns and ale-houses and also in the shops of apothecaries, grocers, chandlers, and that 7000 houses lived by the trade. Camden also bears witness that tobacco shops were more numerous than taverns.[1] So completely had the "noxia herba nicotiana," as tobacco is described in the Oxford University Statutes, conquered Society and claimed its votaries.

Such were some of the features of Shakespearean England. In the subsequent chapters I shall endeavour to describe other traits of this remarkable era, the time when Shakespeare wrote his immortal works and tells us incidentally something of the peculiarities of the period. Undoubtedly it was a great age, but it was new and differed much from anything that had gone before. England was young and restless, and the rushing down "the ringing grooves of change" wrought many ills, which did not escape the lash of the satirist or the

[1] The curious reader will find much information on the subject in my friend Mr. Apperson's recent work on *The Social History of Smoking*.

strictures of the preachers. It was an age as variegated as the costume of the gallant or of the city dame, who changed their garments and the cut and colour of their clothes with every whim of fashion We shall try with the poet's help to interpret and to represent this changing England which Shakespeare knew, and in his words,

> " What now ensues to the judgment of your eye
> I give, my cause who best can justify."

III

RELIGION

THERE is no period of Church History about which it is more difficult to write clearly and concisely than that of the time of Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare. It should be remembered that there was then only one Church in England, the Church of England, but there were several discordant elements, which subsequently separated from her. It is unnecessary for my purpose to trace the course of the Reformation in England. Every one knows of the violent break with Rome that took place in the time of Henry VIII, when the masterful king overthrew the Papal power in this country, constituting himself the Head of the Church. The Reformation was begun in England long before the question of the Divorce. Wise and learned men like Dean Colet and others were feeling after a more excellent way and striving after Reform. But the break came through Henry's action. The great question was, what was to be the future condition of the Church? There were wise men who strove only to purge away Roman errors,

and to revert to the tenets and practice of primitive antiquity. There were foreign reformers who looked to Calvin and Geneva as a model for a Christian Church. Service books and Articles were drawn up, and the vernacular was used instead of Latin services which few understood. But the English reformers used largely the old service books, translating the beautiful old prayers into language understood by the people. During the brief reign of Edward VI the foreign influence grew stronger. The First Prayer Book of 1549 was modified in 1552, expunging certain things to which these foreign good people objected. The Second Prayer Book was scarcely issued before the young king died, and then with the accession of Mary there was a complete restoration of Roman Catholicism with lamentable results for England. Five years of horror followed, which sickened England of Roman tyranny, and then Elizabeth ascended the throne, and the Church was declared to be once more free from the domination of Rome. The Marian persecutions had accomplished more than the actual teaching of the Reformers; it united the people in their detestation of Rome.

Within the fold of the Church there was the Roman party, the moderate party of which Parker was the leader, and the extreme Reformers, who, driven out of England by the Marian persecutions, had lived amongst these foreigners at Frankfort, Zurich and Strasburg and learnt their ways and

modes of worship. They came back rejoicing, eager to find in the new Queen a favourer of their views. They expected that the Church would go back to what she was in Edward's time; but in this they were mistaken.

In the next chapter I shall try to depict the character of the Queen, and to show her cleverness, her artfulness, her duplicity, her extravagance, her penuriousness. We know well her vigorous mind, her strong will, her Tudor character, her love of England and her vehement determination. She needed all these qualities in steering the great ship of the State through the dangerous waves. She saved England, and no less may it be said of her that she saved the Church of England from Roman domination on the one hand and from Puritanism on the other.

The Queen had wise counsellors: William Cecil, who was created Lord Burghley; Nicolas Bacon, Keeper of the Privy Seal; and Matthew Parker, afterwards Archbishop. When she rode into London a Bible was presented to her, which she pressed to her heart and said that she would always read it. Wisely she showed that she was not going to make any violent changes. The Mass was still celebrated in the churches. There were sixteen Marian bishops left. She did not call upon them to resign their sees, but they had to take an oath of allegiance acknowledging her as the Head of the Church; and this they refused to do and ultimately were deprived

of their sees. This determined Queen absolutely refused to yield to any pressure put upon her by either Papist or Puritan, and with the help of Archbishop Parker and Burghley so steered the ship of the Church that she avoided all the rocks and whirlpools that beset her course in a somewhat hazardous voyage.

But the Church had emerged from the Reformation pillaged, robbed, and impoverished. It had been shorn on all sides. The fabric of the churches had been injured and mutilated. Their furniture and sacred vessels had gone to swell the hideous heap of spoil that a rapacious King, greedy courtiers, and other avaricious people had amassed on the pretence of putting down "superstition." Robbery was in the air; no class was exempt from blame. The highest seized on the confiscated lands of the monasteries, and other less exalted persons took the opportunity of possessing themselves of a vestment or altar-cloth to serve for the adornment of their houses, without respect either to the source whence it was derived or the means by which it was obtained. In another book I have given sundry examples of this unrighteous peculation,[1] and need not repeat them here. Money, crosses, candlesticks, copes, vestments, chalices, are included in the list of treasure purloined by private persons. The condition of the churches before and after the great pillage is an extraordinary contrast. Before it even

[1] *The Old-time Parson*, p. 92.

small country churches had an amazing store of valuables which the piety of former generations had amassed. The inventories of Church goods compiled by the Royal Commissioners reveal the existence of a vast amount of sacred treasure. When the Elizabethan parson entered upon his duties all these rich and beautiful adornments had vanished. Memorial brasses had been torn from the floors and his church was ruinated and despoiled.

During the reign of Mary images had been set up again and the Roman use restored, but soon after her sister ascended the throne, there were in most of the towns riotous proceedings on the part of the people, who tore down the images and made bonfires of vestments, service books, ornaments and rood-screens, and the churches were again left bare and destitute.

Nor was this his only misfortune. The Elizabethan parson discovered that his income was in accordance with his plundered church. The dissolution of the monasteries had played havoc with the endowment of his living. Abbots and monks had always been eager to procure the impropriation of tithes; in other words, to become rectors of the parishes, appointing one of their body, or a secular, to act as vicar of each benefice. When the dissolution came the courtiers seized upon the impropriated tithes and never restored them to the Church, to which they lawfully belonged. Hence arose the race of lay impropriators, lay-rectors, whose mis-

deeds are recorded by Spelman in his *History of Sacrilege*. Those noblemen and others, who assisted the Crown in robbing the Church, were amply rewarded by a share of the spoil which they had helped their sovereign to seize. It is often said that Church property thus purloined has a curse upon it, and Sir Henry Spelman shows what a large number of these Church robbers suffered terrible deaths on the scaffold, at the stake, wounding and torture, and how soon their ill-gotten gains passed into other hands.

Nor did this sacrilege cease when Elizabeth came to the throne. She herself was a Church robber and so was her favourite, Leicester. Moreover, a very pretty little business was transacted, worthy of the unscrupulous crew who surrounded the Queen. The lands of bishoprics were seized, and the sees re-endowed with their appropriated tithes. Thus hundreds of parishes were forced to contribute to episcopal incomes, which were thus maintained by the tithes which ought to have been devoted to the sustenance of the parochial clergy. Some of these recipients of Church property were despicable rascals, e.g. Christopher Hatton, the dancing Lord Chancellor, "who bagged no less than 105 grants of tithes, besides Ely Place, the property in London of the Bishops of Ely."

The result of all this robbery was disastrous to the poor parson of the Elizabethan age. He awoke to find himself beggared. Nor were his misfortunes

yet complete. The dissolution of the monasteries had a disastrous effect upon the Universities. Many of the poorer students had been supported by the abbeys, or were lodged in the monastic houses at Oxford or Cambridge; and by the destruction of these institutions were cast adrift. The number of students soon began to dwindle, studies languished, professors left the Universities, and young men, weary of the changes and disputations about religion, no longer flocked to the abodes of learning, but devoted their energies to trade and mercantile pursuits.[1] Hence the Universities, which had been the nursing mothers of parsons, ceased to furnish a good supply of the "inferior clergy," as rectors, vicars and curates are sometimes styled. Fuller speaks of the "mean ministers" of that time, and says that the best that could be gotten were placed in pastoral charges. "Alas! toleration was eminency in that age. A rush-candle seemed a torch when no brighter light was ever seen before."

So the difficulties of the Church were great in the early days of the Queen's reign. Livings were poor. Harrison says that they were worth from £10 to £30 a year, not sufficient to maintain a mean scholar, much less a learned man. This good clergyman, Harrison, who was rector of Radwinter and Canon of Windsor, and whose *Description of England* is

[1] Cf. Latimer's *Fifth Sermon before Edward VI*, 1549. Jewel's *Works*, ii, 999, 1000. Archbishop Sandys, *Works*, p. 154, 1012 (Parker Soc.).

so priceless to all students of Elizabethan times, mourns over the difficulties of the Church. There are so few really good ministers, he laments. We so want able men. The clergy are very heavily taxed; they have to pay tenths and first-fruits, and subsidies, taxes for armour and munitions, and out of £20 a year they only receive £13 6s. 8d. The laity try to make the clergy pay part of their taxes. Who stole all the old Church lands? The Church has now become the ass for every market man to ride on and cast his wallet.

With such grievous complaints does the old clergyman try to relieve his mind. Nor is that all. The clergy have to pay for the Visitations of archbishop, bishop, and archdeacon, and double inquisition fees to the Prince. Thus, he says, "we pay for Prince and laity too, and they both grumble at us and slander us." All was not right with the Church, and he has far more to say than I can set down here. He tells us of his services on Sunday. The Second Prayer Book of Edward VI had been adopted by royal authority with sundry alterations in the direction of the First Prayer Book, i.e. in the direction of what we should call higher Churchmanship, as opposed to Puritan principles. The Queen desired the latter, but the strong Puritan party in the House of Commons objected, and Burghley found that the opposition was so great, that reluctantly he advised the Queen to accept the will of her Parliament.

If the vicar could preach, he was permitted to do so, having obtained the permission from and given satisfactory proof to the bishop or his deputies. Great pains were taken to instruct ministers in preaching. They had to write sermons and to submit them to the judgment of the archdeacon, who examined them; and if the parson made progress he was at length permitted to preach, and became what they called "a painful preacher," i.e. a painstaking one. For those who could not preach a Book of Homilies was provided containing sermons which they were required to read. As there was a scarcity of duly ordained clergymen, Archbishop Parker and the bishops arranged that lay-readers should be appointed to help the parson. All this shows that the Church was not idle.

Then the clergy in several dioceses arranged to meet frequently for the purpose of studying Holy Scripture together. These meetings were called Prophesyings or Exercises, and were simply of the nature of what we have in the present day, clerical meetings. In their essential nature they were harmless and indeed useful and essential; but they were principally conducted by the Puritan faction, and were used for the purpose of advancing their peculiar tenets. The Queen saw the danger of these gatherings, and though the bishops were in favour of supporting them and regulating them, the imperious and strong-willed sovereign ordered them to be suppressed. Harrison gives a description of

these clerical conferences, which he valued very much. Two young ministers expounded some passages of Scripture for an hour, and then a graduate summed up, and commented on their discourses, praised the good and rebuked the slack ones. The laity attended these gatherings, which he thought were very useful to the clergy, induced them to study their books, and kept them away from hawking, hunting, tables, cards, dice and (*O mores!*) tippling in ale-houses, shooting matches, and other vanities, "nothing commendable to such as should be godly and zealous stewards of the good gifts of God, faithful distributers of the Word unto the people and diligent pastors according to their calling." He regretted very much that "the author of all mischief" had stirred up adversaries who had succeeded in suppressing these conferences.

What were the contentions of the Puritan faction? Were they hostile to the Church? Undoubtedly. They wanted to remove from the Church "the remnants, relics and leavings of the Pope and papistry," as they termed the ceremonies and doctrines. The foreign reformers, Calvin, Bucer and Beza, were their authorities. The Church's ceremonies to which they objected were "badges, signs and sacraments of idolatry and idolatrous priests, which had their beginning from the Devil and Antichrist, whose implements and trappings they are." Harrison was a bit of a Puritan. He speaks of Confirmation, and says that "most

care little for this ceremony." The Puritans objected to the Prayer Book, which they said was full of "general and particular corruptions." It was based on "popish portuise." The Scriptures are "barely read" without exposition and mangled into "Pistles and Gospells." Apocryphal writings are inserted and Holy Days kept. They objected to the use of the Cross in Baptism, private communions for the sick, the apparel of the ministers, imposition of hands in the Ordinal. The surplice was "a rag of popery." Most extraordinarily bitter was the Vestiarian Controversy. Even the square college-cap was furiously fought over. Moreover, "the Lord Bishops, Deans, Chancellors, Commissaries and such like" were compendiously described as "the Pope's bastards" and the "body of Antichrist." They objected to the character of the existing clergy, one of whom, John Frith, of Grafton, they said could neither preach nor read well, his chiefest trade being to cure hawks that are hurt or diseased, for which purpose many do usually repair to him. Shakespeare's clergyman at Stratford was an excellent parson—"learned, zealous and godlie—a happy age if our church were fraight with manie such."[1] But Thomas Cartwright definitely cut the tie that more or less bound the faction to the Church. As Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and in the pulpit of Great St. Mary's Church he

[1] *The Seconde Parte of a Register*, edited by Dr. Peel. This work throws wonderful light upon Puritan ideas and the controversies of the time.

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, AND PREACHING AT PAUL'S CROSS

From a picture in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries, London

thundered forth the precepts of his party, and showed that it was no simple difference about vestments and the minutiæ of ceremonial, but an absolute denial of episcopacy and orders. The Puritan ideal was definitely opposed to every idea of churchmanship. Cartwright did not claim merely liberty of conscience for his followers, but an actual dethronement of the Church and the substitution of his party for the system of Church Government that had been established and that had always existed from primitive times. His faction was prosecuted by the civil power, not by the Church, and drifted off into Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. It had little popular sympathy during the Queen's reign, though later on it gathered force, until at length it worked its will and brought to ruin both Church and King.

In the meantime the Roman controversy loomed large. For some years Roman Catholics continued to communicate and even to minister in the Church of England, and for a time all seemed to be going peacefully. But the Roman party began to plot and to threaten. The Pope issued a Bull declaring Elizabeth illegitimate and absolving her subjects from their allegiance. Conspiracies were discovered against her life. Rebellions broke out. The country was flooded with seminary priests from Douai, who preached treason, the murder of the Queen and the enthronement of Mary Queen of Scots, as well as looking after their flocks. They dressed as laymen

and celebrated Mass in the houses of their adherents. A large number of the gentry still clung to the "Old Religion," and had chapels in their houses and secret hiding-places for the priests. Severe edicts were enacted against them. They were styled recusants, and were fined mercilessly for not attending their parish church, and the priests were hunted and if caught were executed. Between 1575 and 1585 there were sent to England about 250 of these priests. Sixty of these suffered the penalty of death. But however severely recusants were fined and persecuted they remained loyal to the Queen and to their country, and no man was a traitor when England was in danger during the time of the Spanish Armada, but all flocked to the standard to save the country from a foreign foe.

It is difficult to determine what part Shakespeare took in these controversies. Some have declared that he was a Puritan, which he certainly was not. Others assert that his sympathies were with the recusants, that the Ardens were Roman Catholics, and that one of them, Edward Arden, suffered death on a charge of conspiracy. They say that the cause of his leaving his home at Stratford was not any deer-slaying adventure, but that it was connected with his religion, which was opposed to that of the Puritan, Sir Thomas Lucy.[1] These are

[1] Sir Thomas was a friend of Fox, the author of the *Acts and Monuments*, that did much to arouse England against the cruelties of Roman persecution. Fox acted as tutor to Lucy's children.

speculations which cannot be verified. He was a man who "wore not his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at." He utters some of the most beautiful and inspiring Christian thoughts. He speaks of the Holy Land:

> "Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet,
> Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
> For our advantage on the bitter cross."[1]

Perhaps wearied with the controversies of his age he bursts forth:

> "In religion what damn'd error but some sober brow will bless it, and approve it with a text."[2]

There is a reference to the difference between the Puritan and the Church's mode of singing in *Winter's Tale*. Churchmen sang in a lively fashion; the Puritan in a Geneva drawl. Hence the shepherd seems to have combined both methods; for in the company of singers who came to the sheep-shearing "there was but one Puritan among them and he sings Psalms to hornpipes."

There is rather a cryptic allusion to the Vestiarian controversy in *All's Well that Ends Well*, when the clown says: "Though honesty be no Puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart." Popular applause probably greeted the allusion to the Smithfield fires of martyrdom in *Winter's Tale*,

[1] 1 *Henry IV*, Act I, scene 1.
[2] *Merchant of Venice*, Act III, scene 2.

when Leontes said to Paulina, "I'll have thee burned," to which she replied :

> "I care not,
> It is an heretic that makes the fire,
> Not she which burns in it."

The sect of the Brownists, from whom sprang the Pilgrim Fathers, the followers of Brown of Norwich is alluded to with some scorn by Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*, when he says he would as lief be a Brownist as a politician.

The views of our poet, however, with regard to religious controversy are not clearly stated. The Dean of Norwich shows that he had learnt his Church Catechism. He speaks in *Hamlet* of the fingers as "pickers and stealers," [1] evidently referring to the duty to one's neighbour "keeping my hands from picking and stealing." He always shows a reverence for holy things, for God and religion. This is abundantly exemplified in the Plays. How beautiful is his description of the death of a Christian warrior who gave

> "His pure soul unto his captain Christ,
> Under whose colours he had fought so long."[2]

He speaks of reverence as "the angel of the world." He knew the value of repentance "whereby the Eternal's wrath's appeased," and "By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins." He refers to the guilt of Judas "who did betray the Best."

[1] *Hamlet*, Act III, scene 2, l. 348.
[2] *Richard II*, Act IV, scene 1.

Of our Saviour he speaks as "The world's ransom blessed Mary's Son." In his Will he commends his soul into the hands of God "hoping and assuredly believing through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of everlasting life." In the Historical Plays he depicts many scenes of Catholic ceremonial, introducing cardinals, priests, papal legates, monks, friars, etc., but he shows no appreciation of their ritual; his clergy are treated as historical characters, as human beings whose faults and failings, virtues and good deeds are depicted with impartiality, and some of his speeches, as in *King John*, set forth the independence of the English Crown from subservience to the Papal claims and deny the Pope's "usurped authority." We can imagine with what applause such sentiments would be greeted in an Elizabethan theatre. That he saw the weakness of Puritanism and the foolishness of some of its professors, is shown in his picture of Malvolio, who is described by Maria in *Twelfth Night* as "a kind of Puritan"; to whom Sir Andrew replies:

"O! if I thought that, I'd beat him as a dog."

Though neither Puritan nor Papist, Shakespeare shows in many passages a deep religious spirit, and it is fairly safe to assume that his beliefs and his sympathies were with the moderate party in the Church, the *via media*, of which Hooker, Parker, Jewell and Whitgift were the main exponents, and to which the majority of the people in the land

belonged. He had a very intimate knowledge of Holy Scripture. We find very frequent allusions to the historical facts and characters of the Bible. He speaks in *Henry VIII* in that noble address of Wolsey after his fall of "man the image of his Maker," recalling how in Genesis we read "God created man in His own image." Adam and Eve and the serpent are mentioned in *Richard II*, Act III, scene 4, and in other passages. Cain and Abel, Noah's flood, Job and his wife, Jacob and Laban, Pharaoh and the lean kine and the Egyptian plagues, the manna in the wilderness, Deborah, Jephthah, David and Goliath, the Queen of Sheba, King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel (he shows his knowledge of the Apocrypha and the story of Susannah), Judas, Herod, Pilate, are all mentioned, and there are constant parallelisms and direct quotations from the Scriptures in the Plays.[1] Amidst the controversies of the day he seems to say "A plague on both your Houses"; and he presents kindly portraits of the English clergy of his day, though with a little satire and comic relief, in which playwrights have been accustomed to indulge, but without a touch of that grotesque coarseness and vulgarity which showed itself in the dramas of the Restoration period.

The story of the Religion of his time covers some thirteen years of the reign of James I. These years

[1] On *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible*, by Charles Wordsworth (1864).

witnessed changes not a few. Somewhat to the astonishment of churchmen, the great "Solomon of the North" supported the claims of the English Church, and favoured neither Romanist nor Puritan. His favourite maxim, "No bishop, no king," pleased not the latter, and the Romanists who hoped great things from the new sovereign were disappointed, and the Gunpowder Plot was the result, though the leading Roman Catholics had no share in it. I need not dwell on the Hampton Court Conference, on the harsh measures dealt out to both of the extreme parties, of the magnificent translation of the Bible, and of much else that occurred before Shakespeare rested in his grave at Stratford.

I might say one word about the criticism and harassing of the clergy, upon which Harrison is very strong. Some, he says, find fault with our threadbare gowns, and declare it is because we have wives to keep, whereas our poverty is due to avaricious patrons of livings who are hard and grasping. They grind us down. They demand out of a benefice of £20 a year twenty quarters of oats, ten quarters of wheat, and sixteen of barley, which they call hawk's meat. Such patrons scrape the wool off the cloaks of us parsons, and then complain our gowns are threadbare. No wonder the learned author was indignant! The laymen, too, found fault with the widows of clergymen, who were too "fond" and married again without considering their calling. He asks, Do not some duchesses,

countesses, or the wives of barons and knights do the same? "Eve will be Eve, though Adam would say nay." The marriage of the clergy, to which the Queen so much objected, increased their power of exercising hospitality, and the poor were more often fed, the parsonage was better furnished and the food was better and more frugally dressed. In spite of all the criticisms of grasping patrons, who vilified the clergy in order to steal their lands, a married clergy was the best both for the country and for themselves.

There is a sketch of a country parson in Ben Jonson's *Magnetic Lady*, which shows that there was nothing much amiss with the position of the worthy old man, who was certainly a "prelate of his parish" and a somewhat fussy autocrat:

> "He is the prelate of the parish here,
> And governs all the games, appoints the cheer,
> Writes down the bill of fare, pricks all the guests,
> Makes all the matches and the marriage-feasts—
> Without the ward: draws all the parish wills,
> Designs the legacies and strokes the gills
> Of the chief mourners: and whoever lacks
> Of all the kindred he hath first his blacks.
> Thus holds he weddings up and burials
> As the main thing: with the gossips' stalls
> Their pews, he's top still at the public mess;
> Comforts the widow and the fatherless
> In funeral sade; sits 'bove the alderman;
> For of the wardmote quest he better can
> The mystery than the Levitic law:
> That piece of clerkship doth his vestry awe.
> He is, as he conceives himself, a fine
> Well-furnished and apparelled divine."

Of course there were "black sheep" amongst the Elizabethan parsons. At Bridestowe and Sourton, in Devon, in 1582, articles of misdemeanour were drawn up against the rector, one Gilbert Gerwyn, by some of his parishioners. He refused to communicate an old bedridden woman at Easter unless he were paid a penny for doing so. "For his pryde, skoldying, avarice, and crueltye, his manner is hated and abhored by all the two parishes, and so driveth them awaye from the church." Other examples of bad clergymen might be found, but these few black sheep did not make the whole flock black, or warrant the strictures of the advanced Puritans.

A very notable official in the Church of the period was the Parish Clerk, who alone of all the minor Orders survived the changes wrought by the Reformation. Shakespeare alludes to him in *Richard II* when he makes the monarch face his rebellious noble, saying:

> "God save the King! will no man say, Amen?
> Am I both priest and clerk? Well then, Amen.
> God save the King! although I be not he:
> And yet, Amen, if Heaven do think him me."

During the dearth of clergy the clerk seems often to have discharged duties which scarcely pertained to his office. The episcopal inquiries show that in the absence of the vicar he used to read the service. The Injunctions of Archbishop Grindal issued in 1571 show that the clerk used to presume to

perform the marriage service, baptize, administer the cup in Holy Communion, and say the service, while in the Lincoln diocese in 1588 he used to read one lesson and the epistle, and in Devon he used to "ease the minister" by reading prayers, churching women, christening, burying and marrying.[1]

In many towns lecturers were appointed by the townsfolk and were often thorns in the sides of the clergy. They were not appointed by or under the jurisdiction of the bishop or parson, preached extreme Puritanism and stirred up the people against the vicars.

The clerical dress in Shakespeare's time is fully set forth in the Canons, which enjoin "a prescript form of decent and comely apparel so that they might be had in reverence and be known to the people, and thereby receive the honour and estimation due to the special Messengers and Ministers of Almighty God." The framers of the Canons regretted the newfangleness of apparel which some factious persons had introduced and hoped that it might soon die out. The superior clergy and incumbents were ordered to wear gowns with standing collars and sleeves straight at the hands, or wide sleeves, as were used in the Universities, with hoods and tippets of silk or sarcenet and square caps. A curious print of the meetings of Convocation shows

[1] For the complete story of this official the reader is referred to my book, *The Parish Clerk*.

this clerical attire. During their journeys parsons were ordered to wear cloaks with sleeves, commonly called priests' cloaks, without guards, welts, long buttons, or cuts. They were not allowed to wear any coif or wrought night cap, but only plain night caps of black silk, satin or velvet. In private houses parsons might use any comely and scholar-like apparel, provided it be not cut or pinkt, and that in public they go not in doublet and hose, without coats or cassocks, and any light-coloured stockings were forbidden.

The condition of the Cathedrals was rather lamentable. The estates had been plundered and avarice reigned. Most of the stalls of the canons were empty, the prebends were no prebends, but useless additions to prior preferments. Clever men at the Universities held a contempt for the ministry and preferred to take to Physic and Law, lest, as the Church was so poor and had been so plundered, they should not be able to gain a living by entering the clerical profession. Froude gives a description somewhat exaggerated of the cathedral establishments of the period:

"Deans and canons by the rule of their foundations were directed to dine and keep hospitality in their common hall. Those among them who had married broke up into their separate houses, where, in spite of Elizabeth, they maintained their families. [The Queen had issued her injunctions to Parker against the marriage of deans and canons.] The

unmarried ' tabled abroad ' at the ale-houses.' The singing men of the choir became the prebend's private servants, ' having the Church stipend for their wages.' The cathedral plate adorned the prebendal sideboards and dinner-tables. The organ-pipes were melted into dishes for their kitchens ; the organ-frames were carved into bedsteads, where the wives reposed beside their reverend lords : while the copes and vestments were coveted for their gilded embroidery, and were slit into gowns and bodices. Having children to provide for, and only a life interest in their revenues, the chapters, like the bishops, cut down their woods, and worked their fines, their leases, their escheats and wardships, for the benefit of their own generation. Sharing their annual plunder, they ate and drank and enjoyed themselves while their opportunity remained ; for the times were dangerous, and ' none could tell who should be after them.' "

The picture is a little fanciful, but doubtless in the main true, and it needed the sternness of a Laud to cleanse such an Augean stable.

. . . . . .

In reviewing the story of religion in the time of Elizabeth and during the whole century we can easily see that the state of Christianity in the country was not very perfect, and that the Church, hampered by State control, and trying gradually to settle itself into its proper position, never reached its highest level. She had plenty of good men, but few of supreme excellence. Calvinism with its

gloomy creed threatened her. She produced no theological works of the first rank, save those of Hooker and Jewell. As Bishop Creighton wrote with regard to the Church :

" It is well to abandon all illusions about the sixteenth century. There were strong men, there were powerful minds, but there was a dearth of beautiful characters. A time of revolt and upheaval is a time of one-sided energy, and of moral uncertainty, of hardship, of unsound argument, of imperfect self-control, of vacillation, of self-seeking. It is difficult in such a time to find heroes—to discover a man whom we can unreservedly admire."

There was much ignorance among the people. Men clung with tenacity to their convictions whether Protestant or Papist. There were many heroes amongst the recusants who suffered the spoiling of their goods rather than the abandonment of their faith. There was much irreligion, much sense of freedom from all restraints, frivolity, licentiousness and drunkenness. According to the Puritan Stubbes, " the Book of God was rent, ragged and all be-torn," and harassed by many difficulties and contending factions the Church had much ado to mend its tatters.

One feature of the Church life of the period was the severe discipline exercised over both clergy and laity. I have already told you about the somewhat severe methods that were adopted to produce " painful preachers," how they had to submit their

sermons to the Archdeacon for inspection, and how they were not allowed to preach until they were in the opinion of that official duly qualified. The times of services were duly fixed. Matins was said at an early hour, at seven or eight o'clock, and not at 11 a.m. as is the modern custom, and therefore the prayer to Almighty God for having " brought us to the beginning of this day " was more appropriate then than now. The Litany and Communion Service followed, and Evensong was said in the afternoon. All people were required to communicate at least three times in the year, and children and young people under twenty years of age were ordered to be catechised and instructed every Sunday and Holy Day before or at Evening Prayer. The names of parents, masters and mistresses who did not send their young people to the catechising, were presented to the Ordinary to be censured or punished. The names of children who did not know their Catechism were also presented. Evil-doers could not receive the Holy Communion unless they had done penance before the congregation. People who did not attend church were fined 12d. Every detail of parochial and Church life was minutely inspected and examined. Bad behaviour in church, or outside the church, or frequenting inns during service-time rendered the guilty liable to punishment. The churchwardens and sidesmen had no sinecure. It was their duty to enforce the discipline of the parish. Special week-

day services were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but the clergy were required to say morning and evening prayer every day, and Mistress Page was one who would not miss either service. Fasting was enjoined on Wednesdays, and Parliament ordered that fish should be alone eaten on that day, for the advantage of fishermen. Sermons were long and numerous in London, and Paul's Cross was the great preaching place to which there was much resort to hear the great divines of the day.

Psalm-singing was very popular. Sternhold and Hopkins had produced their terrible Old Version of the Psalms in verse. I have a copy of the Bible and Prayer Book (in Black Letter) and bound up with them is this metrical production of the two scribes. However, it was welcomed cordially by the people, who sang the verses lustily in spite of their bad poetry, and perhaps found relief in them after enduring a long homily or a tedious discourse.

The system of ecclesiastical discipline exercised in parochial life, the watchful care over each detail of Church observance, which extended even to the saying of grace before meals in private houses,[1] the

[1] Shakespeare often alludes to the saying of grace. These are some passages:

"I will not be absent at the grace."—*Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I, scene 1.

"While grace is saying, hood mine eyes thus with my hat and sigh and say, Amen."—*Merchant of Venice*, Act II, scene 2.

"I could never say grace in all my life."—*Titus Andronicus*, Act IV, scene 3.

There are two long graces in *Timon of Athens*, Act I, scene 2, and Act III, scene 6.

minute inspection as revealed in Inquiries by bishops and the returns of churchwardens and questmen, show a great amount of activity and religious zeal on the part of the Church ; and though it was difficult at a time when there was a large amount of unsettlement in the minds of people, when there were so many cross-currents and eddies, to produce a high standard of religion, I cannot endorse the statement set forth by either Puritan or Papist that has been made that the influence of the Church was lacking ; or that the state of Religion in the Elizabethan age was altogether bad.

IV

THE COURT

SHAKESPEARE was born on April 23rd, 1564, six years after Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, and lived to enjoy the doubtful privilege of spending the last thirteen years of his existence under the rule of the foolish "Solomon of the North," King James. He lived in stirring times, when England began to feel her power and to awake to a sense of freedom and independence; and yet when the wondrous boy was born in Stratford the country was in the direst peril. England was described by the ambassador of one of the nations which coveted the kingdom as being a realm "without money, men, armour, fortresses, practice in arms, or good captains." Her population was small, only about four or five millions, less than that of London at the present time. In the disastrous reign of Queen Mary and her fanatical consort, Philip, her military power had dwindled, the attention of the Government being concentrated upon the extirpation of "heresy" and the burning of "martyrs," rather than upon the

defence of the realm and the development of its resources.

Two countries coveted our fair English land, Spain and France. Foreigners said that this realm was like "a bone between two dogs." In spite of the laws of the Church and the unlawfulness of marrying his deceased wife's sister (an inconvenience that could always be removed by the decree of the Pope), Philip of Spain wanted to wed the imperious Queen, in order to win England from his rival Henry II of France, who was in his turn eager for Elizabeth to marry his son. How cleverly she played one against the other, met intrigue with intrigue, and matched her cunning with that of the craftiest heads in Europe, is a matter of history. It is amusing to notice how she mystified the Ambassadors to her court, played with them, cajoling and flattering, now pretending that she was only a weak woman and could not understand statesmanship, and then appearing firm as a rock, stout, brave, determined, ready to face the world in arms and dictate her terms.

No wonder the embarrassed Count de Feria, writing to his master, Philip of Spain, expressed his amazing difficulties: "It is troublesome to negotiate with this woman, as she is naturally changeable." Therein he was quite mistaken. It was her determined policy to mystify and puzzle these officious servants of their Spanish sovereign. Sometimes she used to greet them with great

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND HER COURT VISITING BLACKFRIARS, JUNE 16, 1600

From the painting of Marcus Gheeraris in the possession of the Earl of Ilchester at Melbury

compliments and the politest of phrases, and then the Ambassador would report: "I do not know whether she is fishing, which is quite possible," or again murmur, "I am not sure about her; I do not understand her." Poor hoodwinked Noialles, the French Ambassador, wrote in the bitterness of his spirit: "She hath more dissimulation than sincerity or honesty. Few people living can play that game as well as she." In a moment of desperation the unlucky Ambassador of Spain exclaimed: "This woman is possessed of a hundred thousand devils."

Courageous and masterful as her sire, as any Tudor, eager for power and popularity, cunning, learned, quick, amazingly tactful, as vain as any girl of her beauty, her bright eyes and commanding presence, such were some of the characteristics of the famous Queen who came to rule over England in the hour of her great peril and anxiety. Not only from the Continent did danger threaten. There was the constant rivalry of Mary, Queen of Scots, who had been proclaimed Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland by the French King, her father, who contested the legitimacy of Elizabeth's birth. Aided by the arms of France, Scotland during the early years of her reign was a formidable danger. But the fair, frail and beautiful Mary threw away her opportunities and brought destruction upon herself. She married Darnley who was assassinated. There was the *affaire* Rizzio, who shared his fate;

and then by her marriage with Bothwell she alienated the attachment of her subjects. A powerful insurrection broke out in Scotland, and Mary was soon a refugee in England and then a prisoner. Elizabeth was relieved from the fear of a Scottish invasion, but while her rival lived there was the constant danger of plots to place Mary on the throne of England. A less brave woman would scarcely have faced the difficulties of her situation. There were the conspiracies of the Duke of Norfolk, the insurrection of the northern earls, the sentence of excommunication passed upon her by the Pope, the dispatch of seminary priests from Douai to spread sedition throughout the country and raise up plots against her life; and behind all these were the intrigues of Spain, which somewhat resembled modern German methods.

Many were the suitors for her hand. After her bigoted brother-in-law, Philip II of Spain, had received his *congé* the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was a potential suitor, in spite of the Queen's avowed determination that she would never marry a Roman Catholic. Then the claims of his brother the Archduke Charles; and amusing it is to read in the dispatches of ambassadors how the Queen postponed a decision and played with the Emperor of Austria and Philip. She would never marry a man she had not seen. Let the Archduke come to her country as a suitor, and she would see if she liked him. The Queen of England

had no intention of humbly suing for a husband, and she would make no promise to accept the Archduke even if he came to her country. And there were others. James Hamilton, Earl of Arran and Duke of Châtelherauldt, who was the next heir to the Scottish throne on the death of Mary if she died without issue, possessed some attraction, as by his marriage the union of the northern and southern kingdoms would be effected. But his offers were declined when the sagacious Queen seemed to see that her difficulties with Scotland were less pressing. The King of Sweden, Eric IV, a nephew of the King of Denmark, Sir William Pickering, "tall, handsome and very successful with women"; Duke Hans Casimir, second son of the Elector Palatine, the Duke d'Alençon, sought her hand, and received encouragement, and amidst all these proposals and negotiations there was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, a worthless person, the receiver of bribes from Spain, a married man, who seemed to dominate her affections and retain her regard.

A strange character was this wonderful Queen. Frivolous, vain, voluptuous, caring little for the scandals she created, she loved to be surrounded by handsome men; and yet she could be hard as steel, determined in council and resolute in her determination. She loved pleasure, the merry dance, the chase, the tournament and courtly display, and yet from her amusements she would turn to discuss abstruse questions of foreign and

domestic policy with her ministers in firm tones without a smile or a jest, often displaying the violence of her temper and abusing them with a powerful invective in the language of Billingsgate. She had learnt Greek and read her Greek Testament every morning. She encouraged literature and was the patron of learning. She could appreciate the beauties of the *Faerie Queene*, and the genius of Shakespeare. French and Italian works were no sealed book to her. And from these studies she would turn with equal readiness to the killing of stags, dancing the canary, or the brawl on the pavin, and flirting with Leicester or any other handsome man who frequented her Court.

In spite of all the Queen was the idol of her people. Amidst all the maze of her strange, lonely life, her courtships, her diplomacy, she had but one aim, the good of England and the welfare of her subjects. She won their affection and their goodwill. She procrastinated ; she kept her enemies at bay ; she flattered them, cajoled them, hoodwinked them ; she lied, she deceived, because England was not ready. Quietly she was gathering the nation's strength. Slowly her navy grew. By the exploits of her seamen, the achievements of her gallant commanders and leaders, by the gradual multiplication of her arms and munitions, by her wise government, and knowing that she had the love of her people to be depended upon, she knew that England was ready when the time came for her to

strike. And when the hour arrived she threw off the mask that she had so long worn, and was prepared to meet her Spanish foe, when the Invincible Armada appeared in sight of the English shores and threatened with rack and thumbscrew the English heretics, and England became the Mistress of the Seas.

The continuity of history is a pleasing study. Curiously enough the success of England in overthrowing the Armada, and her continued supremacy on the sea, may be traced to the victory of Spain in the naval battle of Lepanto, which was won with high towering galleys. Encouraged by that success Duke John continued to build his galleys for the attack on England, imagining that they were quite as useful for ocean-going seamanship as in the smoother waters of the Mediterranean. The result proved the fallacy of his theories, the smaller English vessels, well manned, well armed, easier to steer and encircle the ponderous galleons of Spain, were the victors in the strife, and from that day to this the control of the sea has been in the hands of England. May her navies continue to hold that supremacy in the present hour of danger and relentless war when the diabolical engines of modern warfare, the mine and the submarine, have added their terrors to naval fighting.

Elizabeth's love of England was the key to her policy. " Nothing, no worldly thing under the sun, is so dear to me as the love and goodwill of my

subjects," she declared to her first Parliament; and whether she was cajoling an ambassador or playing the suitors for her hand one against another, the welfare of England was her sole object, her one absorbing care. She was fortunate enough, or wise enough, to select wise counsellors. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was her indispensable Secretary of State, learned and the lover of learned men, discreet but not heroic, sound in his religious views against Papal pretensions. He was always at her right hand to support her and help her through her many difficulties. Sir Francis Walsingham was another faithful and sturdy adviser and eminent statesman, whom his royal mistress used in her sportive moods to call her moon, who guided her course during the dark night that threatened Europe at that time. She had reason to congratulate herself on having a counsellor so honest and sagacious as Walsingham.

Another courtier was Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, a great favourite of the Queen, who sent him to Ireland to crush Tyrone's rebellion, a mission that little pleased him. I have seen in a country house, Hulton Park, Lancashire, some original autograph letters written by him to the Queen, sometimes complaining of his banishment and occasionally expressing his ardent affection for Elizabeth, and his longing to be with her at Court. These were endorsed by the methodical Queen, who labelled the former *malcontent* and the latter *d'amour* with

her initials E.R. The story of his execution and of the fatal ring is too well known to be here recorded. She must have retained much affection for him, as when she heard of the wrongful detaining of the ring the news nearly broke her heart. His sister, Penelope Devereux, a beautiful girl without wealth, was married to the old ill-favoured rich Lord Rich, but was beloved by the most accomplished gentleman of his age, Sir Philip Sidney, of Penshurst. Everyone knows the story of Astrophel and Stella and the sonnets and poems Sidney wrote in honour of his "Stella," Penelope Devereux. He spared not her rich husband,

"Rich fools there be whose base and filthy hearts,"

while he poured forth his love to "Stella, sovereigne of my joy," "Stella, food of my thoughts, hart of my hart." When Lord Rich died she married Charles Blount, Earl of Devon, a worthless husband, thus escaping from the frying-pan into a very warm fire. Sidney married the heiress of Sir Francis Walsingham, and this, too, proved an unhappy marriage. Other courtiers were Mountjoy, Sir Francis Knolles and his daughter Lettice, who married Leicester after the death of poor Amy Robsart, "Wild" Darrell of Littlecote, whose memory is associated with a terrible story that Mr. Hubert Hall, who knows intimately all the chief personages of the period,[1] has proved to be

[1] *Elizabethan Society*, by Hubert Hall.

one side, the ladies on the other, but the latter were so numerous and took up so much room on account of their farthingales, that some of the lords had to sit on the ground on the rushes. The banquet lasted two hours, and there were excellent joints, but the delicacies and the cleanliness were a little lacking in the opinion of the Italian scribe. Dancing followed the supper.

We need not follow the visitors further, except to note that they were rather shocked on remarking that Corpus Christi Day was not observed in England, and that the shops were all open and the people at work, and also that they had reason to remember their visit on account of the costly gifts which the Queen gave them, consisting of gold and silver cups, hackneys, spoons, forks,[1] and divers dogs—mastiffs, hounds and setters—and chains of gold.

Such scenes were very frequent during Elizabeth's reign. We might follow the Court to Windsor and witness the festivities held there on several occasions, and trace her royal Progresses through the country to the mansions of her leading subjects and to her several residences. Greenwich was her favourite palace, where she was born and generally

[1] This shows that forks were not uncommon in high circles and polite society in Elizabethan times. Coryat, in his *Crudities*, mentions that he was surprised to see people in Italy using forks, and wrote as if they were unknown in England. Perhaps they were in the society in which Coryat moved; but at Court, in the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and in noblemen's houses, they were no novelties.

lived, "particularly in summer for the delightfulness of its situation," as Paul Hentzner, a distinguished visitor to England in 1598, describes it. This worthy man was a travelling tutor to a young German nobleman, and records what he saw with minute accuracy and precision. He came to the palace at Greenwich when the Queen was there, and was much impressed by what he saw.

"The Presence-Chamber was hung with rich tapestry, and the floor after the English fashion strewed with hay (or rushes), through which the Queen commonly passes on her way to Chapel. At the door stood a gentleman dressed in velvet with a gold chain, whose office was to introduce to the Queen any person of distinction that came to wait on her. It was Sunday, when there is usually the greatest attendance of nobility. In the same hall were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, a great number of Counsellors of State, Officers of the Crown, and Gentlemen, who waited the Queen's coming out; which she did from her own apartment when it was time to go to Prayers, attended in the following manner:

"First went Gentlemen, Barons, Earls, Knights of the Garter, all richly dressed and bare-headed; next came the Chancellor, bearing the Seals in a red-silk Purse, between Two; one of which carried the Royal Sceptre, the other the Sword of State, in a red scabbard, flushed with golden Fleurs de Lis, the point upwards: next came the Queen in the Sixty-fifth year of her Age, as we are told, very majestic; her Face oblong, fair, but wrinkled; her

Eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her Nose a little hooked; her Lips narrow, and her Teeth black (a defect the English seem subject to, from their too great use of sugar); she had in her Ears two pearls with very rich drops; she wore false hair, and that red; upon her Head she had a small Crown, reported to be made of the gold of the celebrated Luneboug table.[1] Her Bosom was uncovered, as all the English ladies have it, till they marry; and she had on a Necklace of exceeding fine jewels; her Hands were small, her Fingers long, and her Stature neither tall nor low; her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day she was dressed in white Silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and over it a Mantle of black silk shot with silver threads; her Train was very long, the end of it born by a Marchioness; instead of a Chain, she had an oblong Collar of gold and jewels. As she went along in all her state and magnificence, she spoke very graciously, first to one, then to another, whether foreign Ministers, or those who attended for different reasons, in English, French and Italian, being well skilled in Greek, Latin, and the languages I have mentioned, she is mistress of Spanish, Scotch and Dutch: Whoever speaks to her, it is kneeling; now and then she raises some with her Hand. While we were there, W. Slawata, a Bohemian Baron, had letters to present to her; and she, after pulling off her glove, gave him her right Hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels, a mark of particular Favour:

[1] "At this distance of time it is difficult to say what it was." Note by Horace Walpole in his edition of *Hentzner's Travels*, printed at his Str wberry Hill Press.

Whenever she turned her Face, every body fell down on their knees.[1] The Ladies of the Court followed next to her very handsome and well-shaped, and for the most part dressed in white; she was guarded on each side by the Gentlemen Pensioners, fifty in number, with gilt battle-axes; in the Antichapel next the Hall where we were, Petitions were presented to her, and she received them most graciously, which occasioned the acclamation of, LONG LIVE QUEEN ELIZABETH! She answered it with, I THANK YOU, MY GOOD PEOPLE. In the Chapel was excellent music; as soon as it, and the Service was over, which scarce exceeded half an hour, the Queen returned in the same State and Order, and prepared to go to Dinner. But while she was still at Prayers, we saw her Table set out with the following Solemnity:

"A Gentleman entered the room bearing a rod, and along with him another who had a table-cloth, which after they had both kneeled three times, with the utmost veneration, he spread upon the table, and after kneeling again, they both retired. Then came two others, one with the rod again, the other with a salt-seller, a plate and bread; when they had kneeled, as the others had done, and placed what was brought upon the table, they two retired with the same ceremonies performed by the first. At last came an unmarried Lady (we were told she was a Countess) and along with a

[1] Her father had been treated with the same deference. It is mentioned by Fox in his *Acts and Monuments*, that when the Lord Chancellor went to apprehend Queen Katherine Parr, he spake to the King on his knees.—Horace Walpole.

King James I suffered his courtiers to omit it.—*Bacon's Papers*, V, ii, p. 516.

married one, bearing a tasting-knife, who when she had prostrated herself three times, in the most graceful manner approached the table, and rubbed the plates with bread and salt, with as much awe as if the Queen had been present: When they had waited there a little while, the Yeomen of the Guard entered, bareheaded, clothed in scarlet with a golden rose upon their backs, bringing in at each turn a course of 24 dishes, served in plate, most of it gilt; these dishes were received by a gentleman in the same order they were brought and placed upon the table, while the Lady-taster gave to each of the guard a mouthful to eat for fear of any poison. During the time that this guard, which consists of the tallest and stoutest men that can be found in all England, being carefully selected for this service, were bringing dinner, twelve trumpets and two kettle drums made the hall ring for half an hour together. At the end of all this ceremonial a number of unmarried ladies appeared, who with particular solemnity lifted the meat off the table, and conveyed it into the Queen's inner and more private chamber, where after she had chosen for herself the rest goes to the Ladies of the Court.

"The Queen dines and sups alone with very few attendants; and it is very seldom that any body, foreigner or native, is admitted at that time, and then only at the intercession of somebody in power."

Our garrulous visitor then goes on to tell us of the Queen's Park stocked with deer, with an old square tower called Mirefleur, supposed to be that mentioned in the romance of Amadis de Gaul,

joined to a plain where knights and other gentlemen used to meet at set times and holidays to exercise on horseback.

Such are some of the glimpses of Court life in Elizabethan times. The Queen loved State and pageantry and ceremonial, and nought was lacking to suit the royal taste of the imperious Tudor sovereign, to impress the foreigner and to awe her subjects.

Masques were frequently performed before the Queen, the ladies and gentlemen attiring themselves in gorgeous costumes and dancing, and these were continued in full force during the reign of her successor. Very brilliant were the masques arranged on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth by " lords and ladies, with many ingenious speeches, delicate devises, melodious music, pleasant dances with other princely entertainments of time, all which were singularly well performed in the Banqueting house," as Busino records. The gentlemen of the Inns of Court also performed masques before the King and Queen,

" in order to express their singular love and dutious affection to his majesty. . . . They employed the best wits and skilfullest artisans in devising, composing, and erecting their several strange properties, excellent speeches, pleasant devises and delicate music, brave in habit, rich in ornaments, in demeanour courtly, in their joy by land and water very stately and orderly. . . ."

I should like to quote more of Busino's interesting description of these masques, but it is far too lengthy and verbose, and perhaps greatly exaggerated. Other accounts of royal functions in the time of this Scottish " Solomon " are not so edifying. His Queen, Anne of Denmark, by her frivolous ways, and he by his rough manners, did not maintain the dignity of the Court. On one occasion the masque began: Bacchus appeared on a car followed by Silenus on a barrel, and twelve wicker flasks performed ludicrous antics. Twelve boys as pages, Mount Athos, as nearly the size of life as the stage would allow, and Mercury, the god of trade, all vied with each other in flatteries to the King. At last twelve cavaliers in masks, with the young Prince Henry as the central figure, chose their partners and danced every kind of dance, the last being the Spanish dance in single pairs, until they were weary. Whereupon the surly, bad-tempered King shouted aloud, " Why don't they dance? What did you make me come here for? Devil take you all: dance!" So Buckingham, prime favourite, sprang forward, cutting a score of lofty and very minute capers with so much grace and agility, that he appeased the King's wrath and pleased everybody. Prince Henry greatly distinguished himself by his dancing, and bowing, and cutting capers, and every step of his was in time. There were strange doings on another occasion, when the characters in the masques appeared to lack temper-

ance ; and Victory lay in a drunken slumber, and Peace was quarrelsome, and fought with her olive-branch and the scenes were disgraceful.

Court life degenerated greatly under the rule of this uncouth monarch, who was never happy except when he was hunting, for which he had a passion. I could tell you much about this, but this chapter is growing too long already.

I have scarcely mentioned, I think, the royal progresses. Gloriana was a restless soul, and was always on the move, staying at her several palaces, or in the homes of her nobles. She came sometimes to Windsor, then a quiet country town sleeping under the shadow of its lordly castle, one of the finest royal palaces in Europe. It is redolent of the *Merry Wives*, which, it has been said, was written by the Queen's command, and that she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days. Some writer has said that the Queen rather suggested a part of the plot, as she wished to see Falstaff in love. There were Fords and Pages living then in Windsor, and the Garter Inn existed at that time, and, of course, Herne's Oak and Datchet Mead. There is a reference in the play to the festival of the Order of the Garter, which may have taken place near the time of its performance :

> " The several chairs of order look you scour
> With juice of balm and every precious flower
> Each fair instalment, coat and several crest
> With loyal blazon ever more be blest !

And nightly, meadow fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring,
The expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;
And *Honi soit qui mal y pense* white
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue and white;
Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee."

Elizabeth used to visit her palaces in turn. After Whitehall, she journeyed to Greenwich, Hampton Court and Richmond, and then into the country, where she honoured many a mansion or manor house, and where you will often find a bed-chamber with an elaborate mantelpiece and plaster ceiling with E.R. engraved upon them in remembrance of her visit, and, of course, the bed in which she is said to have slept. The expense of entertaining her majesty with her large Court was very great, especially as she expected to receive costly presents. It is said that one poor squire, threatened with a visit, thought it cheaper to burn his house down, rather than to welcome the Queen. But in spite of the cost she was usually cordially welcomed, and everything was done to delight her by shows and pageants, sports and morrice-dancing. At Coventry the guilds performed their accustomed play of the fight with the Danes, and she bestowed upon them her grudging praise, "What fools ye Coventry folk are!"[1]

The progresses of King James were not so successful and did not give the same pleasure to his subjects

[1] Nichols's *Progresses* fully tells the story of the Queen's wanderings.

as Elizabeth's had done. I will venture to describe an elaborate pageant on the Thames on the marriage of his daughter, the unhappy Queen of Bohemia; and then my chronicle of Court doings must end. Howes tells us that the entertainments consisted of "fantastique or enchanted castles, rocks, bowers, forests, and other devices floating upon the water, being as pleasant to behold by day, as they seemed strange by night. A stately fleet of ships, galeons, argoses, galleys and bergantines, furnished with cannons and guns, sailed up the river between London Bridge and Whitehall, and encountered the King's pinnace and other ships of war, and the castles and rocks and beacons, and the Turkish galleys resembled Algiers, and the whole was meant to represent the battle of Lepanto, the show being rather spoilt by the coming in of the tide and the contrary wind."

Just before all this gaiety and pageantry took place, the young Prince Henry died. It was a sad blow for England, as he promised to make a good King.

V

THE LONDON OF SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE'S London was a far different city from the great overgrown modern metropolis, as we know it. Before the sixteenth century the space within the old city walls sufficed for the bulk of the population, which did not exceed 120,000 at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth's sire. Nor was it overcrowded, as there were monasteries and noblemen's houses with gardens and pleasances and orchards bearing fruit. But in the reign of the Virgin Queen all this was altered. The city began to grow. The monasteries had been dissolved, and noblemen's houses occupied their site. The gardens within the walls were built over with sordid and mean hovels where plague germinated. The streets were narrow and irregular, and in spite of the royal edict of 1580 which prohibited the erection of buildings on new sites within a radius of three miles of the City gates, or the dividing of houses into two or more tenements, poor people flocked to London as they have been doing in recent years, driven principally by poverty

and by the decrease of agricultural labour, and the City became overcrowded. Plague stalked abroad in the narrow, ill-drained, tortuous streets, in the "stinking lanes," as a contemporary writer described them, such as Turnagain Lane that ran down the slope to Fleet Ditch, and in the crowded pestilential dwellings of inner or outer London.

In spite of all this London was a noble city, a City of palaces and towers, of fine churches and splendid residences of nobles and bishops, of great inns, of busy wharves and bustling commerce; and over all towered the great steeple of old St. Paul's, shorn of its spire, a magnificent cathedral, though Time had laid its heavy hand upon its fabric. Looking at an old map of London we see on the east the Tower of London standing out conspicuously with its guarding walls and strong fortifications, Old London Bridge connecting the City with Bankside where the church of St. Mary Ouverie (now Southwark Cathedral), the Globe Theatre, and the Bear Garden, are conspicuous, Barnard Castle, many a tower or spire of the City churches; but the grand Cathedral of St Paul seems to dominate the scene, while the hills of Hampstead and Highgate form a pleasing background.

But the chief source of its greatness was its river, the noble Thames, which gave to London a port. William Camden wrote that: "The Thames by its safe and deep channel was able to entertain the greatest ships in existence, daily bringing in so

great riches from all parts that it striveth with the mart-towns of Christendom for the second prize and affordeth a most sure and beautiful Roade for shipping." The river was the great highway in Elizabethan times. The roads and lanes were badly paved, muddy, narrow and inconvenient for coaches, which were rare at that period; and if you wished to travel from one part of the City to another you would descend one of the stairs that led to the waterside and be rowed in a barge or wherry by some of the vast number of watermen who plied for hire on the stately river. Its waters could then boast of salmon, and was very different from the dark muddy river with which we are familiar.

Not long before Shakespeare was born the Strand was a country road connecting the City with the village of Charing, whence another road led to Westminster, its magnificent Abbey with its sanctuary and the royal palace. Across the river was the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth, which you would have reached by means of a wherry, though the river was usually fordable at that place, and horses and waggons went through the water. The old maps show the abundance of shipping on the Thames, and the Queen, the great people of the land, the Lord Mayor and the City Companies had their State barges, and used to be rowed up and down the river with musicians on board; and there were splendid pageants on the

water, the City magnates attired in their brilliant robes of office, while city youths and apprentices passed many a happy evening in water quintain, charging each other with wooden spears and shields in their wherries. Stow, who wrote his *Survey* in Shakespeare's time, thus describes the traffic on the river : " By the Thames all kinds of merchandise be easily conveyed to London, the principal store-house and staple of all commodities within the realm. So that, omitting to speak of great ships and other vessels of burthen there pertaineth to the cities of London, Westminster and borough of Southwark, above the number, as is supposed, of 2,000 wherries and other small boats, whereby 3,000 poor men at the least be set on work and maintained."

Perhaps the best way of seeing London in the time of the poet would be to borrow the Archbishop's barge at Lambeth, where the watergate still records the fact that the river once lapped its outer wall, or hire a wherry, and proceed down the Thames, and observe the sights ; and afterwards wander a little through the streets of the City. As we start in our boat we see the noble Abbey of Westminster " where kings and queens are crowned," with its recently completed Henry VII's chapel, one of the three finest examples of late Gothic work in England, and its Jerusalem chamber where Shakespeare tells of the death of Henry IV. The old palace of Westminster looked a little

deserted, as the Court no longer inhabited it, and very different from the present Houses of Parliament erected by Sir Charles Barry between 1840 and 1859 after the disastrous fire of 1834. Westminster Hall, built by William Rufus and rebuilt by Richard II, looked much the same as it does now, but there were then the Exchequer buildings and the Star Chamber, a fearsome court that men liked not to be tried in. Passing down the river we come to Whitehall, then a stately pile, where we have already paid our homage to the Queen. It consisted of a vast courtyard, tennis court and picture gallery; and there were two great gateways, one at the Westminster end called the King Street end and the other at the north end designed by Holbein and called after him, and also the Whitehall or Cock-pit Gate. The grounds included St. James's Park and the Tilt Yard, which was situate where is now the Horse Guards' Parade. Whitehall was formerly known as York Place, being Wolsey's Palace, when he was Archbishop of York, before it passed into the King's hands. The change of name is noted in the play *Henry VIII* (Act IV, scene 1). Passing onwards we see York House, the town dwelling of the Archbishops of York, formerly that of the Bishop of Norwich and then of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and subsequently of Nicholas Bacon, where his illustrious son, Lord Bacon, the idol of the Baconians, was born. It passed later on to King

James's favourite "Steenie," Duke of Buckingham. who built the watergate, sole surviving part of the mansion. Durham House comes next in order, one of the most interesting of the old Strand palaces, formerly belonging to the See of Durham. The Royal Mint was established here. It saw the brief triumph of poor Lady Jane Grey. At the time of our pilgrimage in Shakespearean days it had been granted by the Queen to Sir Walter Raleigh, Salisbury House, the house of the Cecils, Earls of Salisbury, looked proudly down upon the Thames. The palace of the Bishops of Carlisle came next, but before Shakespeare's time it had been assigned to the Russells, Earls of Bedford. We see the watergate and garden of the Savoy palace, which Henry VII converted into a hospital. It was rather under a cloud, being managed by a rascally master, one Thurland, who spent his time and money in developing mines in Cumberland rather than in tending his cure, and went bankrupt. Next stood Somerset House, not the present masterpiece of Sir Robert Chambers, erected in 1776–86, but that raised by Protector Somerset, who pulled down churches and plundered wholesale in order to build this house, wherein Stuart queens held high revel, and masques and dances made the old court gay.

Then we see Arundel House, where lived the Countess of Nottingham, who caused the death of the Earl of Essex by the non-delivery of a ring

to Queen Elizabeth. The Earl's own house, Essex House, formerly known as Leicester House, stood next to the home of his enemy. It is associated with the two favourites of the Queen. Dudley, Earl of Leicester obtained it by royal grant, and after his death in 1588 it passed into the hands of his unfortunate stepson, the Earl of Sussex. Spenser refers to this house and to its owner. Of Leicester he wrote :

" Next whereunto there stands a stately place,
Where oft I gayned gifts and goodly grace
Of that great Lord, which therein wont to dwell ;
Whose want too well now feels my freendles case."

And then of Essex :

" Yet therein now doth lodge a noble Peer,
Great England's glory and the world's wide wonder,
Whose dreadfull name late through all Spaine did thunder,
And Hercules' two pillors standing neere
Did make to quake with feare."

The Temple Gardens next greet our eyes as we row down the river. The Temple is redolent with Shakespearean memories. In Middle Temple Hall *Twelfth Night* was acted on February 2nd, 1601–2. Here we feel in close touch with the poet, who in the first part of *Henry VI* makes the gardens the scene of the white and red rose-plucking by the respective adherents of the houses of York and Lancaster. Spenser also alludes to the Temple in the lines :

" Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer Knights to bide."

Where once the White Friars had their holy house, Stow says, "that many fair houses were built for noblemen and others." The place had the privilege of sanctuary and became the Alsatia of the outcasts of society. Shakespeare alludes to it in the play *Richard III*, whither the body of Henry VI is ordered to be taken. Adjoining this was the royal palace of Bridewell, which Edward VI has given to the City of London for a workhouse and house of correction. The third act of *Henry VIII* is supposed to be laid here. Close here the unsavoury waters of the Fleet Ditch emptied themselves into the Thames.

On the site of Printing House Square stood the house of the Black Friars, wherein Queen Katharine was tried. Some of the Queen's courtiers lived here. Playhouse Yard proclaims the site of Burbage's theatre, and Shakespeare had a house here. It is near the summit of St. Andrew's Hill, and was purchased by him in 1613. It is described in the extant Deed of Conveyance as "now or late being in the tenure or occupancy of one William Ireland . . . abutting upon a street leading down to Puddle Wharf on the east part, right against the Kinges Majesties Wardrobe." Ireland Yard remains to the present day and at the juncture of this road with St. Andrew's Hill was undoubtedly a home of Shakespeare. Ireland Yard leads by Glasshouse Yard, to Playhouse Yard, part of the site of the Blackfriars Theatre. Glasshouse Yard tells of the

industry of glass-making started by the Queen; and several artists lived within the precincts. Barnard's Castle frowns down upon us as we pass, formerly the ancient fortress built by Ralph Barnard, a follower of William the Conqueror; but that had passed away and that which we see was erected in 1428 by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. In the play *Richard III* the Duke of Gloucester is here offered the crown by the Duke of Buckingham.

We begin to see the busy scenes of the Port of London, the river crowded with shipping, though we must wait until we have passed London Bridge before the extent of London's commerce is revealed. Here, however, is Paul's Wharf, that takes its name from the great cathedral hard by, Broken Wharf, which was perhaps named from the breaking up of old ships; Queen Hythe and the Three Cranes, where casks of wine from Bordeaux and Spain were craned up on the Vintry Wharf. We pass the Steelyard, where the King's beam weighed the tonnage of goods brought to London, and where the Hanse merchants exercised their ancient privileges of German "peaceful penetration," whose extortionate career was ruthlessly stopped by the imperious Queen. Shrewsbury House, to which a long history is attached—too long to tell here—was fast falling into decay, and was about to make way for meaner dwellings. Just at the foot of London Bridge was the "Olde Swann," a hostel with stairs and landing-place. The passage of a boat under the narrow

arches of London Bridge was not unattended with danger, and as we are prudent folk we land here and walk across the end of the bridge, joining our barge again on the other side.

London Bridge was considered one of the wonders of Europe; but it is a somewhat mean and unsuitable structure, acting as a dam and causing an accumulation of fallen ruins, so that "shooting London Bridge" was a very perilous adventure. There was a drawbridge in the centre, so that ships with high masts could pass, and on the bridge were constructed various buildings, including a chapel with two storeys, and Nonsuch House, a wooden building imported from Holland, with towers and spires. Over the gate were the arms of Queen Elizabeth. The bridge had originally a gate at each end, that on the southern side being known as Bridge Gate and subsequently Traitor's Gate, so named because the head of traitors were displayed on spikes above it, and the other was taken down in 1577 just before our water-pilgrimage began.

We pass by several wharves and landing-places: Lion Key, Billingsgate, which Norden in his map-drawing seems to derive from Bellyn, till we come to the Custom House, just newly built, and Gallery Key; and then the old Tower with its Traitor's Gate and stout portcullis that seemed like iron teeth to devour the unfortunate rebels. The Tower had ceased to be a royal residence, and was mainly

a gloomy fortress, a prison for traitors, or supposed traitors, whose torture chambers and the block lacked not many victims. It contained also a primitive Zoological Gardens, where, in 1598, were confined three lionesses, one lion, a tiger, a lynx, a wolf, a porcupine, all kept in a remote place, "fitted up for the purpose with wooden lattices at the Queen's expense."[1] Here James and some members of his Court came to see some lions and a bear bated by dogs, a somewhat sickening spectacle. The Tower is often mentioned in the plays and scenes laid therein. St. Katherine's Hospital, that benevolent institution founded by Queen Matilda, wife of King Stephen, and which blossomed anew in modern times in Regent's Park, completes the points of interest recorded, in Norden's map, and there our pilgrimage may end, and we may return along the southern side.

Glancing at this southern shore of the Thames river we notice "S. Towleyes," which name is a corruption of St. Olave's, Tooley Street, "a fair and neat large church" of a parish inhabited "especially by aliens or strangers and poor people," as Stow records, who tells also of the ancient hostel of the Abbot of St. Augustine, Canterbury, nigh the church, in his time divided into tenements. Then we find ourselves in a most interesting Shakespearean neighbourhood, that of Southwark with its noble church of St. Saviour or St. Mary

[1] *Social England*, III, p. 782.

Ouverie, which in modern times has been raised to the dignity of a cathedral. It contains a splendid modern memorial of the poet, who for some time resided in the Bankside, the tomb of Edmund Shakespeare, the poet's brother, of Philip Massinger, the poet Gower, the player Lawrence Fletcher, and John Fletcher the dramatist. Sir Aston Cokayne's verses record the memory of two of these poets :

" In the same grave Fletcher was buried, here
Lies the stage poet, Philip Massinger ;
Plays they did write together, were great friends,
And now one grave includes them at their ends ;
To whom on earth nothing did part, beneath
Here in their fames they lie in spight of death."

West of the church stood Winchester House, the town residence of the Bishops of Winchester. Some remains of the hall can still be seen in the large warehouse that now covers its side. Further west is the region of Shakespearean drama, where stood the Rose Theatre, called in Norden's map the Playhouse, which we shall see again when we visit the London theatres, and the Bear-house where bears were baited and other cruel sports indulged in, both situate in Paris Gardens. Further west we find the Lambeth Marshes, and a little further on the Palace of the Archbishop, whence we started on our pilgrimage.

We must now leave the river and traverse the narrow winding streets of the City, and contrast its appearance with the London that we know to-day. The walls of the City, though somewhat decayed,

still surrounded it, but the ditches had been filled up with refuse. The City gates still frowned down upon the passenger, and Newgate had just been rebuilt (1586), when Shakespeare tramped from Stratford and probably entered London through its portals. He had passed through Uxbridge past the gallows at Tyburn, along Holborn. He saw Staple Inn, very much as we see it to-day, and then through Newgate entered the City. Within the walls in Pre-Reformation times there had been a large number of monasteries with their gardens and orchards. These for the most part were situate in the region north of the great line of streets, Newgate, Cheapside, Cornhill, Leadenhall and Aldgate, while south of this there were tortuous streets and masses of buildings in which the population was closely packed. In Elizabeth's time the northern portion was being quickly built over, in order to provide dwellings for the large number of immigrants who flocked into London. The house of the Grey Friars had been converted into Christ's Hospital, or the Bluecoat School, by the Queen's royal brother, King Edward VI, where now the Post Office stands. Part of the old London wall has been discovered recently in the open space in front of the new Post Office buildings, and in this wall was a gate leading to the grounds of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, close to which still stands the famous church with the tomb of the founder Rahere. The open space Smithfield lay before it,

formerly the scene of gorgeous tournaments, and of the cruel fires of martyrdom which had not long before died down. If we proceeded northwards we should soon see the Charterhouse, once the pious home of the old Carthusians. But the monks had gone, and the noblemen had entered into their possessions. It had not yet begun its career as a hospital and famous school, but was the home of the clever nobleman, Lord North, who had trimmed his sails to every wind that blew, retaining the favour of all the Tudor monarchs from the time of Henry VIII to that of the Virgin Queen, who was often entertained by him at the Charterhouse.

When Shakespeare came to London he marched along Newgate Street to St. Martin's le Grand, and as he passed along the street saw the shambles or meat market. Close at hand, where the collegiate church stood, was a wild Alsatian colony that enjoyed the privilege of sanctuary, where broken men, rufflers, fraudulent debtors and outlaws congregated, and defied the mermidons of the law.

The youthful poet would turn aside to see the grand Cathedral of old St. Paul's, walking along Old Change and entering the precincts by St. Augustine's Gate. Its grand stern beauty must have made a deep impression upon his mind. The noble proportions of the building and its great size, the soaring height of the nave and the massive tower 200 feet in height, which had lost its lofty spire in 1561, would strike the visitor with a sense of the

dignity of this glorious church. In the churchyard he saw Paul's Cross which Stow describes as "a pulpit cross of timber, mounted on steps of stone and covered with lead in which are sermons preached every Sunday in the forenoon."

He enters the Cathedral and admires the grand beauty of the building, its walls ablaze with colour, richly canopied tombs and floor of marble; but being a lover of life and all things that pertain to humanity, he is distracted by the strange humour of Paul's Walk; and sees the motley crowd that promenaded the central thoroughfare. Shakespeare afterwards represented Falstaff in *Henry V* as having "bought Bardolph in Paul's," and Dekker describes the strange crowd composed of "the knight, the gallant, the upstart, the gentleman, the clown, the captain, the apple-squire, the lawyer, the usurer, the citizen, the bankrupt, the scholar, the beggar, the doctor, the idiot, the ruffian, the cheat, the Puritan, the cut-throat, highman, lowman and thief; of all trades and professions some; of all countries some. Thus while Devotion kneels at her prayers, doth Profanation walk under her nose in contempt of Religion."

Here lawyers received their clients; here men sought service; here usurers met their victims, and the tombs and font were mightily convenient for counters for the exchanges of money and the transactions of bargains; and the rattle of gold and silver was constantly heard amidst the loud

talking of the crowd. Both men and women vied with each other in the display of their costumes, and fair maids looked not displeased when gallants paid them marked attention.

But we have seen enough of such profane irreverence, and walk with the youthful poet to Paternoster Row, and look with envious eyes at the stalls of the booksellers. At the west end of West Cheap, now called Cheapside, was the Little Conduit and the Church of St. Michael-le-Querne, and, then one of the marvels of London, the famous Goldsmiths' Row, described by Stow and built by Thomas Wood, goldsmith, in 1491. It was newly painted and gilded in 1594, and in the windows were exhibited a great store of Venetian gold cups, jugs, ear-rings and ornaments of various designs that excited the admiration of the Queen. Here, too, is Bread Street, where the bakers congregated, and Friday Street with its fish-shops, and with a front to both thoroughfares stands the Mermaid Inn, where poets and wits assembled in the memorable Mermaid Club. There we meet Shakespeare, Sir Walter Raleigh, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, Selden and a host of others. Was there ever such a galaxy of genius? No wonder Beaumont wrote:

> "What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! Heard words that have been
> So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
> As if that every one from whom they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life."

No wonder that a modern bard has told in sonorous verse the deeds done by this brilliant company. Proceeding eastward we come to Bucklersbury, where were the shops of the grocers and apothecaries and herbalists, to which Falstaff refers in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* when he contends that he was not "like a many of those lisping hawthorn-buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklerbury in simple time." Mercers' Hall stood then where it does now, the premier Company's abode, chief of that noble band of City Guilds which have done so much for London and for England. Old Jewry, Bow Church, the Eleanor Cross, the Great Conduit, the Standard, where Lord Say was killed by Cade's rebels, all these we pass in our pilgrimage.

The modern Guildhall is very different now in appearance to what it was in Shakespeare's time; but Sir Thomas Gresham held the civic feasts and displayed the proud and sumptuous hospitality of the Lord Mayor as in modern days. In the churchyard of the neighbouring church, St. Mary Aldermanbury, is a modern monument to Hemmings and Condell, Shakespeare's companions, who earned the gratitude of posterity by collecting and publishing his plays. The church was destroyed in the Great Fire, and the present one was built on the site of the former edifice.

It is impossible to traverse all the streets of old London and note its buildings in this brief chapter,

but we must examine some of the most prominent. When Shakespeare came to London the Great Bourse, or Royal Exchange, was newly built, and Queen Elizabeth had opened in state that noble building, reared by the famous City merchant Sir Thomas Gresham after the fashion of the Bourse at Antwerp. It consisted of a large quadrangle surrounded by a cloister, above which was the Pawn, a corridor or promenade with shops and stalls full of costly goods, wherein a fashionable company strolled in the evenings, and the scenes that enlivened or disgraced Paul's Walk in the daytime were re-enacted. Above this were sets of rooms for business purposes, and a great bell-tower and a tall Corinthian column, each surmounted by the Gresham crest, a grasshopper, completed the building. An excellent view of this is given in Holler's print. The traders who assembled here formed a very cosmopolitan crowd. Merchants from Venice and Vienna, Lombards, Frenchmen from Paris and Bordeaux, traders from Amsterdam, Antwerp and Hamburg, all flocked here, and almost every language was heard and every style of foreign garb seen. No wonder Dekker observed that " at every turn a man is put in mind of Babel."

In East Cheap are the cooks' shops, where a savoury meal may be procured, and some noted inns and taverns, the Black Bell, once the residence of the Black Prince, the King's Head and the Boar's Head, over which Dame Quickly presides

and Falstaff is often in attendance. In Cannon Street we must glance at London Stone, which has crossed the road since Shakespeare's time, and think of Jack Cade striking it with his sword and exclaiming, "Now is Mortimer lord of the City." Shakespeare makes him say: "Here sitting upon London Stone I charge that the conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign" (*Henry VI*, Part II).

Bishopsgate Street had many fair houses of prosperous merchants. Sir Thomas Gresham had a residence here. At Crosby Hall[1] the poet makes Richard Duke of Gloster bid the Lady Anne to

"Presently repair to Crosby Place,"

and there Richard lived and plotted the murder of the Princes in the Tower. In Elizabethan times it was the residence of the richest merchant in the City, Sir John Spencer, whose daughter and heir made a romantic marriage, which has been recorded already. In the same street lived Sir Paul Pindar, another worthy whose name I have mentioned on an earlier page.[2] Sir Francis Walsingham lived close by at the Papye, formerly a hospital for poor priests, and here still stands the beautiful Church of St. Helen, formerly attached to the nunnery of St. Helen. We are on Shakespearean ground, as

[1] Now removed to Chelsea. For a history of the house see my book, *London Survivals* (Methuen).

[2] For a sketch of his life see *London Survivals*, p. 206.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE, LONDON

From an engraving by Hollar

a subsidy roll in the Record Office records that the poet once lived in the precinct in 1598. It appears that he was then so busy writing plays and acting that he forgot to pay his quota.[1] A fine window has been erected to his memory in the church. Another great Elizabethan, though little accounted of in his time, John Stow, the historian, to whose monumental work every writer is indebted, lived hard by, close to the Church of St. Andrew Undershaft, wherein is his monument erected by his widow.

I have no space wherein to describe all the numerous churches in London, so many of which were swept away by the Great Fire. We should have noticed in Broad Street the beautiful church of the Augustine Friars, which was granted by Queen Elizabeth to the Dutch colony in London and still remains in their possession. In Shakespeare's time the precincts had been divided into gardens, and there was a large house erected by William Paulet, first Marquis of Winchester, whose son ruthlessly plundered the church and sold the monuments and everything else that was of value. At the juncture of Fenchurch and Leadenhall Streets stood the hospitium of the priory of Holy Trinity, known as Christ Church, the greatest of all the monastic institutions in London except Westminster. The prior was held in honour in the City

[1] Roll of the Pipe, 49 Eliz. 1598: "William Shakespeare in the Parish of St. Helen's Bishopgate owe 13s 4d of the subsidy."

and ranked as an Alderman. The King seized the priory at the dissolution of monasteries, and gave it to Sir Thomas Audley, who built a fine house. Stow watched the destruction of the old building, which was wrought with much difficulty. In Shakespeare's time it was known as Duke's Place, as it had passed to the Duke of Norfolk, who married Audley's daughter.

If we wended our way northward through Bishopsgate we should come to Shoreditch, where there is a modern church dedicated to St. Leonard. The registers of the older church have happily been preserved, and in them we find the names of Tarleton, the Queen's jester, James Burbage, his son Richard, Cuthbert Burbage, William Somers, George Wilkins (poet and player), Richard Cowley (player) and many other of the actors in the Burbage and Shakespeare companies. They used to act in the two theatres called the Curtain and the Theatre, which stood in the Finsbury Fields on land that formerly belonged to the Priory of Holywell. The Theatre was Burbage's playhouse; the Curtain was erected by a rival. But of theatres I hope to tell in a later chapter. In Shoreditch Church there is a monument to the memory of the famous family of Burbage, to whom the Elizabethan drama owes so much, and a memorial window to our national poet.

As we traverse the streets of Elizabethan London and meet the people Shakespeare knew, we notice many strange sights and curious characters. I

have not mentioned the abodes of the lawyers, save the Temple. There was Gray's Inn with its association with Lord Bacon. In its hall, which was regularly strewn with rushes, masques and revels took place, and here Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* was performed on 28th of December, 1594. There was a great masque given to the Court of Queen Elizabeth by Lord Bacon and his friends, and another on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Prince Palatine. Probably it was after one of these revels that Bacon wrote his essay on *Masques and Triumphs*. "These things are but toys, but since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with elegancy than daubed with cost." The whole essay throws light upon the sort of entertainment that was enacted in the spacious days of good Queen Bess. The garden was laid out by Bacon, who was one of the most distinguished *alumni* of the Inn. Doubtless he framed it after the model set out in his essay on gardening. He was partial to some "fair alleys to give a full shade and shelter, that when the wind blows sharp you may walk as in a gallery." So well did he construct these that they were a feature of the place, according to the rhyme :

"Gray's Inn for walks, Lincoln's Inn for wall,
The Inner Temple for a garden, and the Middle for a hall."

Moreover, he advocated the raising of mounts, "A fair mount with three ascents and alleys,

enough for four to walk abreast." On the west side of the garden he constructed a mount that was called after him, "Lord Bacon's Mount." Moreover, he planted a katulpa tree which he brought from abroad. After his disgrace he retired here and wrote his *Novum Organum*, and, if we are to believe the Baconians, the plays of Shakespeare, the poems attributed to Spenser and also *Don Quixote!* Lincoln's Inn with its fine gate and its old hall and buildings remains, though it has a grand new hall and library. Shakespeare mentions Ely Place, formerly the London house of the Bishop of Ely, the lease of which had been obtained by Sir Christopher Hatton, the dancing Lord Chancellor, by order of the Queen; his name remains in Hatton Gardens. "Bid him repair to Ely-house," occurs in *Richard II* (Act II, scene 1), and Gloster says to the Bishop in *Richard III*:

> "My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
> I saw good strawberries in your garden there;
> I do beseech you, send for some of them."

Such were some of the buildings and the sights of Shakespearean London, when the poet lived therein. But who shall tell the extraordinary varied life of the people? We hear the cries of the white-aproned cooks in East Chepe crying out, "Hot ribs of beef," "Pies well baked." Falstaff and others like him are calling to Dame Quickly, "Come, give's some sack." Riotous apprentices are calling "Clubs." Foreign faces and garb meet us

in the streets, and savage tongues mingle with the English. Poor prisoners in Newgate, the Fleet, the Clink, the Compter, cry aloud to the passers-by for meat and bread. Ballad-singers chant the latest ballad. Autolycus is peddling his wares. Everyone is in a hurry. Courtiers are returning from Whitehall, the crowds of people from the play or the bear-baiting; and as the evening shadows fall, the watchmen call out to the dwellers in the over-hanging houses, "Hang out your lights!" the rufflers and the criminals prowl about seeking whom they may devour. Down Wapping way there are taverns and narrow streets and rope-walks, and there ear-ringed sailors in the inns in an atmosphere foul with tobacco tell of strange adventures in the Spanish Main and of their battles with the Spaniards.

Such were some of the scenes of London life in the poet's time. But it was not far to journey to the country. Chelsea, Pimlico, Charing, were rural villages. The Queen hunted in her parks at Marylebone and Hyde Park. Londoners had not far to travel to go a-Maying and wash their faces in morning dew. Wearied with the din and turmoil of the Great City, we will retire from its crowded street, follow in the footsteps of the poet, and try to find a little rural repose.

LIBRARIES

VI

SHAKESPEARE'S HOME AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

LEAVING London City we will betake ourselves into the country and try to realise the England that Shakespeare knew, the kind of buildings and surroundings on which his eyes were accustomed to rest, whenever he wandered away from the great City of London in the company of players, or abode in tranquillity at Stratford-on-Avon. He was a great traveller along our country roads. Oxford he knew well, where he often stayed at the Crown and, it is said, admired Mistress Davenant, the innkeeper's wife. In 1593 he went to Bristol with Lord Hunsdon's company of actors, whence he wandered by the Severn River to Shrewsbury, and then by Stratford back to London. In 1603 he was at Coventry, and later on Leicestershire knew him, and Coventry and Marlborough, and the towns and villages through which he passed. He was a much-travelled person, journeying in his early days on foot, and in the time of his affluence on horseback. The days of coaching were not yet.

I am going to tell you of the manor houses and the humble dwellings of the poor that studded the country-side when Shakespeare wrote his immortal plays, and of the village life which he knew so well, and which finds reflexion in his verse.

Our first thoughts will go back to that first twenty years of his life spent in the heart of England, that middle shire so picturesque and richly storied, Warwickshire, and to that quaint old town of Stratford which was ever dear to the poet's heart. His writings show that his mind was imbued and his imagination stirred by the legends and traditions of his native shire, by wandering amidst the woodland haunts of the Forest of Arden, by the beauty, variety and freedom of sylvan life. The deer ran wild in the thickets of Arden, and the plays show how skilled he was in the whole art of venery and how familiar with that " highest franchise of noble and princely pleasure."

The banished duke, in *As You Like It*, is made to say :

> " Come, shall we go and kill us venison ?
> And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools,
> Being native burghers of this desert city,
> Should, in their own confines, with forked heads,
> Have their round haunches gor'd."

The poet had often listened to the cry of the hounds or he would never have penned those lines in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that describe their perfections :

> " My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
> So flew'd, so sanded ; and their heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew ;
> Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls ;
> Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
> Each under each."

The sportsmen of those days seem to have taken great pains in selecting their hounds so as to make their cry musical and pleasant to the ear. A contemporary of Shakespeare, Gervase Markham, in his *Country Contentments*, published in 1611, thus describes how it was accomplished :

" If you would have your kennel for sweetness of cry, then you must compound it of some large dogs that have deep solemn mouths and are swift in spending, which must, as it were, bear the bass in the consort, then a double number of roaring and loud ringing mouths which must bear the counter-tenor, then some hollow plain sweet mouths which must bear the mean or middle part : and so with these parts of music you shall make your cry perfect : and herein you shall observe that these hounds thus mixed do run just and even together, and not hang off loose one from another, which is the vilest sight that may be, and you shall understand that this composition is best to be made of the swiftest and largest deep-mouthed dog, the slowest middle-sized dog, and the shortest-legged slender dog, and if amongst these you cast in a couple or two of small singing beagles, which as small trebles may warble amongst them, the cry will be a great deal the sweeter. . . .

" If you would have your kennel for depth of

mouth, then you should compound it of the largest dogs, which have the greatest mouths and deepest flews, such as your west-country Cheshire and Lancashire dogs are, and to five or six couple of bass mouths you shall not add above two couple of counter-tenors, as many means, and not above one couple of roarers, which being heard but now and then, as at the opening or hitting of a scent, will give much sweetness to the solemness and graveness of the cry, and the music thereof will be much more delightful to the ears of every beholder."

And thus does the famous sportsman describe his favourite pastime :

"I think it not amiss to begin and give that recreation precedency of place, which is mine opinion (however it may be esteemed partial) doth many degrees go before and precede all other, as being most royal for the stateliness thereof, most artificial for the wisdom and cunning thereof, and most manly and warlike for the use and endurance thereof. And this I hold to be the hunting of wild beasts in general : of which, as the chases are many, so will I speak of them particularly in their proper places. But before I proceed any further I will tell you what hunting is, and from the true definition thereof make your way more easy and plain into the hidden art of the same. Hunting is then a curious search or conquest of one beast over another, pursued by a natural instinct of enmity, and accomplished by the diversities and distinction of smells only, wherein Nature equally dividing her cunning giveth both to the offender and offended strange

knowledge both of offence and safety. In this recreation is to be seen the wonderful power of God in his creatures, and how far rage and policy can prevail against innocence and wisdom. But to proceed to my main purpose, you shall understand that as the chases are many which we daily hunt, as that of the stag, the buck, the roe, the hare, the fox, the badger, the otter, the boar, the goat and suchlike, so the pursuers or conquerors of these chases (speaking of hunting only) are but one kind of creatures, namely, hounds."

Shakespeare seems to have been quite familiar with the noble art of hunting; and the latest authorities agree in thinking that the traditional story of the poaching affray in Charlecote Park is founded upon fact, and that Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote was the prototype of Mr. Justice Shallow. By his rovings through the forest his mind was stored with the lore of park, warren and chase, and the loveliness of country sights and sounds.

His imagination was also fired by the stirring events in the history of his country. Eight miles away stood the lordly castle of Warwick, with all the associations of the great King-maker. The battle of Bosworth Field was fought only eighty years before the poet's birth, and we know how long stories and traditions linger on in the country. Even now in North Oxfordshire the peasants can tell you stories of the Great Civil War, just as if Charles and Cromwell were fighting the other day; so the

men who Shakespeare knew, the farmers and foresters of Arden, would discourse to him of the century-old battle, and laid in his mind the foundation of those historical romances upon which that great series of historical dramas was constructed. To the value of these merely as a study of English history the great writer, Mr. James Gardner, bears abundant witness.

We will visit first the poet's home, the town of Stratford. We must not expect to find in this modern place all that Shakespeare knew and saw. Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, the great Shakespearean scholar, says that with the exception of a few diffused buildings, scarcely one of which is in its original condition, there is no resemblance between the present town and the Shakespearean borough. But some certainly remain. There is the well-known birthplace of the poet. It is one of the two houses in Henley Street purchased by John Shakespeare, his father, in 1575. It has been somewhat altered and much restored. I have seen an old print of the house as it was in 1858, which shows that it was then in a very dilapidated condition. It has now three graceful gables which were entirely lacking in the earlier picture. The restorers, however, were guided by old prints and plans, and tried to make it as nearly as possible as it was in the poet's time. It is a plain half-timbered house, or rather two cottages made into one. Half a century ago the southern part of it was faced with brick. The

restoration has been done in a very conservative spirit, and only when the woodwork was decayed were new timbers inserted. At one time the house was used as a butcher's shop and the stone floor of the main room was much damaged. This has been left as it was. A great beam supports the floor timbers of the room above this. There is a large stone fire-place with a heavy beam across the top. A door opens to the back-room or kitchen, which has another large chimney-piece with an ingle-nook. A small parlour and back hall complete the ground-floor accommodation, and stairs lead to the cellar and the birth-room on the first floor. This room is very similar to the main room below, and has another large fire-place and lattice windows. Some noted names have been scratched upon the glass, including those of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens. The ceiling is somewhat shaky; so the attics have been closed to visitors. On the left of the entrance there are some rooms in which are stored the municipal archives of the borough of Stratford, and there the governors of the Shakespeare Birth-Place Trust hold their meetings.

The poet's father, John Shakespeare, is reported to have been a man of many occupations according to various writers. These included the trades of a glover, tanner, corn-merchant, wool-stapler, butcher and timber-merchant. It is probable that his original industry was glove-making, and being a man of unwonted energy, who rose to be Chief

Stratford
Church
E.H.NEW

Alderman of his native town, he combined with it other kindred trades and various dealings. The house adjoining his home at Stratford is believed to have been his wool-shop, and is now, renovated and restored, a Shakespearean museum and library, containing many relics of the poet which are too numerous to be recorded here. They are of perennial interest to the crowds of tourists from England, America, the Colonies and every civilised country who make their pilgrimage to the poet's town and home and birthplace and do homage to Shakespeare's memory.

We must look at the garden wherein flourish all the flowers mentioned in the plays, lilies, carnations, "streak'd gilliflowers, the fairest flowers of the season, that some call Nature's bastards," rosemary and rue, "these keep seeming and savour all the winter long," and "morning roses newly washed with dew," pale primrose, "first-born child of spring," cuckoo-cups, poppies, daffodils, lavender, honeysuckle, eglantine, oxlips, pansies, "for thoughts," and all the rest of the old-fashioned English blooms that delighted the poet's eyes, and of which he sang so sweetly.

But the house wherein Shakespeare in his boyhood lived is not the only thing in Stratford upon which his serene brown eyes rested. The whole town in the sixteenth century consisted of these half-timbered, gable-roofed, wood-and-plaster houses, with gardens at the back and also at the

sides ; the streets were broad, and took the form of a central cross, and at the intersection stood the High Cross, a solid stone building with steps below and open arches above. There were held the markets. There was another cross in the Rother market, where quantities of cattle were sold— " Rother " being an old Saxon name for horned cattle, and Shakespeare uses it in his play, *Timon of Athens.*

The old bridge built by Sir Hugh Clopton in the fifteenth century still spans the Avon. Across this the poet must often have wandered, and I seem to see him clinging to his mother's hand strolling along the bank of the stream, watching the graceful swans and listening to her voice as she discourses to him of the lore of birds and flowers, and of the stories of olden times, unfolding the pages of history and of the part which the Ardens and Shakespeares may have played in the national annals. Mary Arden was of gentle birth and good family. There was a Sir Thomas Arden, squire of the body to Henry VII, a brother of Robert, great uncle of the poet's mother.

The buildings of the Grammar School bring us in close touch with the poet's early life, and perhaps in his picture of the Seven Ages of Man he remembered himself as a boy, " with satchell on his back trudging unwillingly to school." This Grammar School was situate in the grand old Gothic buildings of the Guild of the Holy Cross, which in pre-

Reformation days was very rich and powerful. Its records date back to 1352, and it owned most of the property in the town. It was one of those important institutions which conferred so many advantages on the people in the Middle Ages. It taught the children, promoted religion, cherished brotherly love, kept its annual feast and provided for its members in their old age. Some were very wealthy corporations and had a large membership. In 1416 this Guild had 172 members, and its feast was very sumptuous with a very extended menu. The minstrels of Warwick performed during dinner. The young Prince Edward, for a brief space King Edward V, was a member, and the names of many noblemen and gentlemen appear on the Guild roll. The noble Guild chapel remains wherein the priest performed the daily services, and where a candle was kept burning in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Cross, so that "God and the Blessed Virgin and the Venerated Cross may keep and guard all brethren and sisters of the Guild from every evil."

But all this had changed just before Shakespeare's day. The unscrupulous Commissioners of King Edward VI had seized upon the property of the Guild and confiscated its revenues. Happily Stratford fared better than many other guilds. The King was induced to disgorge some of the stolen property and to re-endow the school and the almshouses. In Queen Elizabeth's time the images in

the chapel were defaced and the rood-loft removed and other damage caused, but the Grammar School remained. The hall of the Guild was used for plays in 1568. It is a long narrow room and was built in the early part of the fifteenth century. There is a playground, garden, orchard, homes for the poor brethren, a priest's house, the Pedagogue's House, an armoury and council room, muniment room and library, and the Latin schoolroom. Here the poet received his early education, being thoroughly grounded in Latin, and under the masterships of Walter Roche, Thomas Hunt and Thomas Jenkins; and Sir Sidney Lee has shown by references to the plays how well he knew Ovid, though his scholarly friend, Ben Jonson, declared that he had "small Latin and less Greek." A visit to the large schoolroom makes one picture in imagination the clever, bright, brown-eyed boy sitting at his desk pouring over the *Metamorphoses*, Lily's grammar, or writing in the "Old English" script.

The desk that is said to have been used by him is preserved at the Birth House, though it is probably of later date. Across the road stood New Place, the large house purchased by the poet in the days of his affluence in 1597. It was pulled down by Sir John Clopton in 1702, and a fine new house built which was destroyed by Sir Francis Gastrell half a century later. Its site and the garden were purchased in 1876 through the exertions of Mr. Halli-

well-Phillips, and placed in the hands of the trustees of the birthplace.

New Place must have been a fine house. Queen Henrietta Maria, who came to Stratford during the Civil War with 5000 men, held her Court there for three weeks. In the garden there is a mulberry tree, the grandchild of that planted by the poet, and the well that supplied the house with water remains. The New Place Museum has been formed in the home of Thomas Nash, who married Shakespeare's granddaughter. The shop of Quiney, the Vintner, who married Shakespeare's daughter Judith, is another relic in Stratford. The cellars are interesting and were formerly known as "the Cage," as they were used as the dungeon of the town before they became Quiney's wine cellar.

And then there is the stately church, which is much the same as it was in the poet's time. It is cruciform, with a handsome tower and octagonal spire, dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Shakespeare never saw the present graceful stone spire, which was built in 1763. In his time there was a lead-covered wooden spire. It is an extremely beautiful church and is approached by an avenue of limes. From whatever point you see it the view is most striking. Perhaps the best is that seen from across the placid Avon, the river over which the loving willows droop and kiss the surface of the stream with the earliest catkins and grey leaflets, where

the " mary-birds ope their golden eyes " to greet the sun of spring and the cuckoo flowers fringe the margin of the river. John de Stratford in 1332 founded here a chantry, and in 1351 Ralph de Stratford built " a house of square stone " as a college for priests serving the chantry, and the church became a collegiate church. The transepts and part of the tower belong to the early thirteenth century. Later on in that century the aisles and piers of the nave and the tower were built by the Stratfords, their work ending about 1330. Dean Balshall, in 1465–91, built the noble spacious choir, the clerestory, west window and north porch. Opposite the tomb and mural monument we can pay respectful homage to the poet's memory and gaze at his effigy, which the best authorities consider to be an authentic likeness of Shakespeare himself.

The bust was erected by Dr. Hall, who married Shakespeare's daughter Susannah, and the likeness was obtained from a cast taken by Dr. Hall after the poet's death. The maker of the monument was Gerard Johnson, described as " tomb-maker," who had his yard near the Globe Theatre in London. The effigy was painted to resemble life, the poet being depicted with hazel eyes, auburn hair and beard. The monument was repaired in 1748 by John Ward, the grandfather of the Kembles, with money raised by a performance of *Othello*. In 1793, when whitewash was considered a mark of beauty,

THE SHAKESPEARE MONUMENT

it was painted white by Edmund Malone ;[1] and so it remained until 1861, when it was repainted as we see it now.[2] The inscription is as follows :

" Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem,
Arte Maronem, terra tegit,
Populus mæret, Olympus habet.
Stay, Passenger, why goest thou so fast ?
Read if thou can'st, whom envious Death hath prest
Within this monument : Shakespeare with whom
Quick Nature dide ; whose name doth deck 'ys Tombe
Far more than cost ; sith all that he hath writt
Leaves living Art but page to serve his witt.
Obiit Ano Dom. 1616
Ætatis 53 Die Ap. 23."

The poet's tomb is in the chancel, bearing the well-known inscription :

" Good Friend, for Jesus sake forbeare
To dig the dust enclosed heare.
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones."

It need not be added that these doggerel verses were not composed by our national poet, as Baconians and Mark Twain have asserted. They constituted a stock inscription of undertakers in

[1] This proceeding did not escape the satire of a wit of the period, who wrote in the album at Stratford Church :

" Stranger to whom this monument is shewn
Invoke the Poet's curse upon Malone,
Whose meddling zeal his barbarous taste displays,
And daubs his tombstone as he marred his plays."

[2] There has lately been a lengthy correspondence on the subject in the Literary Supplement of *The Times*, one writer contending that the appearance differs considerably from Dugdale's drawing of the monument ; but it is proved that Dugdale's plates are very fanciful and are not to be depended upon or adduced as evidence.

the seventeenth century. Near the tomb is that of his wife, Ann Hathaway, who must have been a lady of considerable charm, if the lines of a later poet convey the truth, who wrote :

" She hath a way to sing so clear,
Phoebus might wondering stop to hear
To melt the sad, make blythe the gay,
And nature charm, Anne hath a way.
She hath a way,
Ann Hathaway,
To breathe delight Anne hath-a-way."

The tomb of Shakespeare's daughter Susannah, the wife of Dr. Hall, bears some lines written by her daughter Elizabeth, who became later on Lady Barnard, the last of the poet's lineal descendants.

" Witty above her sex, but that's not all,
Wise to Salvation was good Mistress Hall.
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.
Then, Passenger, hast ne'er a tear
To weep with her that wept for all ?
That wept, yet set herself to cheer
Them up with comfort cordiall.
Her love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou hast ne'er a tear to shed."

Evidently the poetic power of sonorous verse had run somewhat thin in this latest of the Shakespearean family. The Registers at Stratford are profoundly interesting as they record the baptism and burial of the poet, and of his relatives.

VII

THE COUNTRY AROUND STRATFORD

THE country of leafy Warwickshire was typical of the rest of England in Shakespeare's time. It was for the most part open and unenclosed, dotted with what the poet speaks of as "poor pelting villages, sheepcotes and mills." It is a country of gentle undulations, soft-flowing rivers and well-timbered vales. The Avon marks the great natural division of the county. The southern open country is termed the Feldon or champagne country. On the northern side is the Arden or the forest land. The heights of Shuckburgh, Napton, Burton and Brailes alone break the monotony of the Feldon plain, which rises in successive undulating billows to Hodnell, Gaydon and Wellesbourne, and sinks to the foot of the Edge Hills on the Oxfordshire borders. Across the Avon the country is more picturesque; though the forest has disappeared, it still retains its sylvan beauty. In Shakespeare's time it was a country of forest wildness and freedom. Many of the farms had but recently been reclaimed, and

most of them had thin bosky acres of "toothed briars, sharp furzes, pricking gorse and thorns," hazel copses and outlying patches of unshrubbed downland.

The villages were composed of black-and-white half-timbered cottages and farms with thatched roofs, which usually surrounded a village green with its maypole in the centre. A noble old church girt by its hallowed acre, and dating back to Norman times, preaching the continuity of English life, its spire pointing with its finger heavenwards, stood at one corner of the village, and not far away was the manor house which the lord of the manor, following the example of his age, was just rebuilding.

Such villages were scattered over the shire of Warwick, and with many of them the poet would be familiar. He would often wander along that footpath, the towpath, and thence in a north-westerly direction to the Wilmcote homestead, his mother's former home, where her father Robert Arden lived. It can still be seen and is a typical yeoman's farm of the period. If you would know what kind of person an Elizabethan yeoman or franklin was like, we might say with the poét in *Henry V*:

> "And you, good yeoman,
> Whose limbs were made in England, shew us here
> The mettle of your pasture."

Sir Thomas Overbury, a contemporary of our poet, in his *Characters*, published in 1614–15,

will enable us to give the amusing and graphic answer:

"His outside is an ancient yeoman of England, though his inside may give arms (with the best gentlemen) and ne'er see the herald. There is no truer servant in the house than himself. Though he be master, he says not to his servants, 'Go to field,' but 'Let us go'; and with his own eye doth both fatten his flock, and set forward all manner of husbandry. He is taught by nature to be contented with a little; his own fold yields him both food and raiment: he is pleased with any nourishment God sends, whilst curious gluttony ransacks, as it were, Noah's Ark for food, only to feed the riot of one meal. He is ne'er known to go to law; understanding, to be law-bound among men, is like to be hide-bound among his beasts; they thrive not under it: and that such men sleep as unquietly, as if their pillows were stuffed with lawyers' pen-knives. When he builds, no poor tenant's cottage hinders his prospect: they are indeed his alms-houses, though there be painted on them no such superscription. He never sits up late, but when he hunts the badger, the vowed foe of his lambs: nor uses he any cruelty, but when he hunts the hare; nor subtlety, but when he setteth snares for the snipe, or pit-falls for the blackbird; nor oppression, but when in the month of July, he goes to the next river, and shears his sheep. He allows of honest pastime, and thinks not the bones of the dead any thing bruised, or the worse for it, though the country lasses dance in the churchyard after evensong. Rock Monday, and the wake

in summer, shrovings, the wakeful ketches on Christmas Eve, the hockey or seed cake, these he yearly keeps, yet holds them no relics of popery.[1] He is not so inquisitive after news derived from the privy closet, when the finding an aerie of hawks in his own ground, or the foaling of a colt come of a good strain are tidings more pleasant, more profitable. He is lord paramount within himself, though he hold by never so mean a tenure; and dies the more contentedly (though he leave his heir young) in regard he leaves him not liable to a covetous guardian. Lastly, to end him; he cares not when his end comes, he needs not fear his audit, for his quietus is in heaven."

Richard Arden's house still stands and is a substantial dwelling-place with a long low roof and dormer windows jutting therefrom, and barns and outhouses and farm buildings. Harrison in his *Description of England* in Elizabethan times tells of the excellent methods of building that prevailed, of the use of white mortar tempered with hair, the even and smooth surface of the walls—"as nothing in my judgment can be done with more exactness." The walls were hung with tapestry, arras work or painted cloths, wherein either diverse histories or herbs, beasts and knots and suchlike are stained. In the Arden house we learn that there were eleven painted cloths which served to keep out the draughts. Farmers such as Richard Arden had learned to garnish their cupboards with

[1] i.e. as the Puritans did.

plate, their beds with tapestry and silk hangings and their tables with fine napery. In his youth Harrison had known what it was to have hard lodging, lying on straw pallets only covered by a sheet with a round log for a pillow. Servants did well if they had a sheet above them, as they seldom had any below them to keep them from the pricking straws that ran oft through the canvas of the pallet and rased their hardened hides. All that was altered. As regards furniture, pewter platters and silver or tin spoons had taken the place of wooden vessels. Farmers had plenty of pewter, three or four feather beds, tapestry carpets, a silver salt-cellar, a wine bowl and a dozen spoons. Doubtless, the Arden house contained all these excellencies, which in the days of his affluence would also be seen in the Shakespeare household in Henley Street.

Not far away from Wilmcote stands the interesting Clopton House, the old residence of the ancient family of the Cloptons, one of whom had built the bridge at Stratford. Report says that the poet often visited the house and buried himself in the library. The principal part of the house has been built since his time, having been erected by Sir John Clopton in the reign of Charles II, whose arms appear on the pediment. The south and west sides are, however, Tudor work and probably date back to the time of Henry VII. It was in this house that Ireland, Shakespeare's friend, wished to make it appear that he had found a depository of Shake-

speare's papers, but he was disappointed by Mr. Williams, who then resided as tenant. The *Confessions* written by the younger Ireland records the conversations between these personages, and is not without humour. In one of the garrets is a small room, said to have been an oratory. The walls are inscribed with scriptural sentences, one text being enclosed in a heart-shaped border. There used to be a figure of a large fish taken by a hook and line, the whole drawn by a hand issuing from a cloud, and beneath this was inscribed :

Whether you ryse earlye
Or goe to bed late,
Remember Christ Jesus
That dyed for your sake.

In the great hall is a large oriel window containing a series of heraldic shields emblazoned with the arms of the families which were allied with the Cloptons for many generations. If you would know more of this illustrious family, you must visit again the church at Stratford, where there are many monuments to its worthy members. There is an altar tomb with no inscription, said to be the monument of Sir Hugh Clopton, Lord Mayor of London in the time of Henry VII. Another white marble tomb records the memory of William Clopton and his wife Anne, who died in Shakespeare's time. There is yet another fine monument of George Carew, Earl of Totnes and Baron of

Clopton and of Joice, his countess, daughter of William Clopton. Ambrose Rokewood, the Gunpowder Plot conspirator, leased the house in the early years of James I's reign, and the company of plotters used to meet in the oratory, above described, to devise the impious designs.

In the same district amongst the hills of Wellcombe, celebrated by a poem written by John Jordan, a wheelwright of Stratford, lie the Dingles, where Shakespeare often wandered and mused upon the traditional battle between the hosts of Britons and Saxons. There are earthworks and a large tumulus, and there stood the house of his friend William Combe, brother of John de Combe, who in his time was reckoned a great usurer. This friend bequeathed to the poet by his will five pounds, but Shakespeare was not prevented by this from writing the following satirical lines :

> " Ten in the hundred lies here engraved,
> 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not saved :
> If any one ask who lies in this tomb,
> Oh, oh, quoth the Devil, 'tis my John o' Combe."

The present house has been built since his time, and therefore does not interest us, but a grand panorama of the beautiful country unfolds itself from the height of the tumulus, and you can see the windings of the soft-flowing Avon, the numerous seats of the country gentry, the town of Stratford, the Edge hills, the hills of Shuckbrough Broadway, Ilmington and the Malvern heights

Between Stratford and Warwick still stands the noble Charlecote House, a fine specimen of Elizabethan architecture. It was built by Sir Thomas Lucy, the alleged persecutor of the poet, who revenged himself by satirising him in the character of Mr. Justice Shallow. This is not the place to discuss the question whether the poaching incident was true or not. Mrs. Stopes, whose accuracy on Shakespearean questions is beyond dispute, pronounces against it. Sir Sidney Lee and many others guardedly accept it; but there are other causes alleged for the persecution, such as that the Ardens were recusants, that the Shakespeares favoured the "Old Religion," and were obnoxious to the stern Protestant squire; but our present concern is with the England the poet knew, and the scenes on which his eyes were accustomed to rest, and we must leave the controversy to the experts.

Charlecote stands on the eastern bank of the Avon, which winds gracefully through the luxuriant grounds of the extensive park. It is shaded with deep and lofty woods, and enlivened with herds of deer, and is joined by the River Hele flowing beneath a beautiful Rialto bridge. Jago sings in the poem "Edgehill":

> "Charlecote's fair domain,
> Where Avon's sportive stream delighted strays
> Thro' the gay smiling meads, and to his bed
> Hele's gentle current wooes, by Lucy's hand
> In every graceful ornament attir'd
> And worthier such to share his liquid realms."

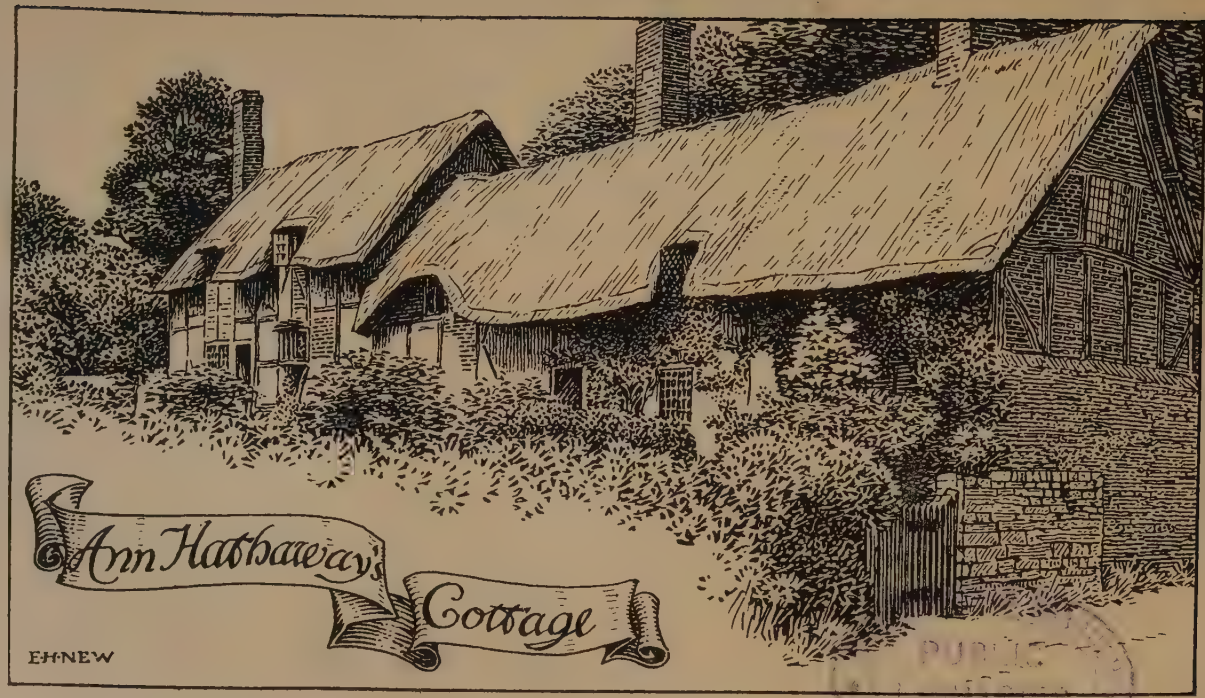
Various alterations have been made in the house, but it still preserves its Elizabethan character. The front is built of brick with stone dressings, and consists of a central portion with three gables, and two projecting wings. There is a fine stone porch elaborately ornamented. Over the door are the arms of Queen Elizabeth. On each side of the window of the room above the entrance doorway are two Corinthian pillars, and on the summit of the whole at the angles are the royal supporters represented sitting, each with an upright banner in his claws. This was added in Shakespeare's time in compliment to the Queen, who visited Sir Thomas Lucy on her return from Kenilworth Castle. The four principal angles of the house are flanked each by a lofty octagonal turret with a cupola and gilt vane. The great Gatehouse, standing a little distance from the front, is a striking building with a large chamber in the upper storey forming a noble banqueting room, and it is flanked by similar turrets with vanes. The great hall of the mansion has a minstrels' gallery, wherein now a large organ has taken the place of the lutes, virginals, violins, cornets, flutes and fifes which discoursed sweet music to Sir Lucy's guests. The great oriel window contains the armorial bearings of the Lucys and their connections. Those arms of Lucy are referred to in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where "Robert Shallow esquire" who wrote himself "Armigero in any bill, warrant, quittance or

obligation," makes play with the word in the following conversation :

Slender. All his successors before him hath done 't; and all his ancestors that come after him may; they may give the dozen white luces in their coat.
Shallow. It is an old coat.
Evans. The dozen white luces do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man and signifies love.
Shallow. The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat.

The luce is a pike. The family is a very ancient one, and through many generations held a high position in Warwickshire. If you would make a better acquaintance with Sir Thomas and his Lady you must enter the modern church, where you can behold his knightly figure and that of his wife well preserved in alabaster.

Another walk by pleasant footpath ways conducts us to the scene of the poet's romance, the village of Shottery and the cottage of Ann Hathaway, renowned in story, the delight of painters and photographers. I have no intention of entering into the many controversies concerning the marriage, as to whether Ann was the daughter of Richard Hathaway, the somewhat impecunious farmer, the place and date of the wedding, and other questions about which much has been written. It is enough for us that here is the cottage or farm, and that tradition has decided that it was the home of Shakespeare's bride, and a very picturesque home


Ann Hathaway's Cottage
E.H.NEW

it was, and is. It is a good example of a Tudor farmhouse of small size, half-timbered with a roof deeply thatched, the thatch curving gracefully over the little dormer windows in the upper storey and steps leading to the front door. A little oriel window juts out on the ground floor, and the garden is abloom with old-fashioned flowers. Modern builders have somewhat spoilt the surroundings by the erection of an ugly row of brick cottages in front of the house, but happily the cottage remains, and is zealously guarded by its faithful custodians, the Trustees of the Birthplace.

Within the house there is much old-fashioned furniture, the family Bible of the Hathaways, an Elizabethan four-posted bed that belonged to the Hathaways, whose descendant Mrs. Baker, until her death recently at an advanced age, was the guardian of the house.

The lordly castle of Warwick and Kenilworth we shall visit later, but there are many villages and houses that are associated with the family of the poet. A John Shakespeare lived for a time in the vicarage of Clifford Chambers, a picturesque black and white house. At Rowington there still stands Shakespeare Hall, where it is believed the poet's paternal uncle, Thomas Shakespeare, lived, and that the poet wrote *As You Like It* in the little room over the porch. His grandfather lived at Snitterfield. Barton-on-the-Heath is mentioned in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and the story of Kit Sly

is said to have a local origin at Wincot. Luddington may be the hamlet wherein Shakespeare was married, unless the ceremony took place at Temple Grafton or Billesley; the picturesque old villages of Welford, Alcester, Alveston, Aston Cantlow and many others, all recall the surroundings of the poet and afford some reflection of the country Shakespeare knew.

We must not forget to visit Shakespeare's crab-tree at Bidford, which recalls a scandalous story of the poet's youth, for which there is not much evidence. A certain rhyme tells of:

> "Piping Pebworth, Dancing Marston,
> Haunted Hillborough, Hungry Grafton,
> Dodging Exhall, Papist Wixford,
> Begging Brown and Drunken Bidford."

The poet with some boon companions is said to have had a drinking bout with the Bidford topers, and as a result he fell asleep under the crab-tree. In the morning, though pressed to resume the contest, he declared he had had enough. He had drunk with all the above-named villages and he cared not to have any more such foolish contests. Such is the story which finds a place in Washington Irving's account of the poet. Whether it be true or not, no one can tell. At any rate, there is the crab-tree descendant of that under which he spent the night "to witness if I lie."

VIII

ROADS AND TRAVELLERS

OUR Shakespeare, as I have already remarked, was a great traveller along the highways of England, and knew its roads well. These were abominable except in summer time, and even then they were full of deep ruts and holes, while in winter they were wellnigh impassable to wheeled traffic. Men and women rode on horseback. There were no light carriages. Queen Elizabeth had her great cumbersome gilt coach, but when she made long journeys she usually rode, sometimes on a pillion behind her Chancellor, attended by her numerous courtiers, while her baggage was carried in two-wheeled waggons drawn by six strong horses. As many as six hundred such carts were used when she was making a royal progress. The speed was very slow. When Mary Queen of Scots was conducted as a prisoner from Bolton Castle to Ripon, a distance of sixteen miles, the journey required the whole of a winter's day, because the road was "foule, long and cumbersome." When Busino journeyed into the country

with the Venetian Ambassador, Contarini, he took six days to travel 150 miles. He wrote: "The roads were so bad that the coach occasional stuck in the mud, though his Lordship's mares were very powerful. And on one occasion it positively broke down." This was in the time of James I.

In mediæval times travellers used to commend their souls to God and make votive crosses on the doorposts of their churches, before starting on their journeys, fearing the dangers of the way. In Shakespeare's time no less apprehensive was the traveller, if we may credit the rhyme:

> "A citizen for recreation sake
> To see the country would a journey take
> Some dozen miles, or very little more,
> Taking his leave with friends two months before,
> With drinking healths and shaking by the hand,
> As he had travelled to some new-found land."

During the later part of the Queen's reign and in that of her successor coaches began to be used in London. They were introduced into England by William Boonen, a Dutchman, the Queen's coachman, in 1564. Taylor, the water-poet, thus humorously described them: "A coach was a strange monster in those days, and the sight of it put both horse and man into amazement. Some said it was a great crab-shell brought out of China, and some imagined it to be one of the Pagan temples in which the cannibals adored the Devil." Later on so many coaches were fashioned that leather became scarce.

In the first half of the sixteenth century horse-litters were sometimes used, and a springless waggon, like a huge timber ark covered within and without with red cloth, the lining fringed with red silk, and the harness made of red leather, with the royal arms painted upon it, conveyed court ladies in royal progresses. But they naturally preferred to ride their steeds, than to be jolted in these cumbersome drays along the rutty roads.

The roads, as I have said, were execrable. It never occurred to the road-makers to make them with the highest point in the centre, so that the water might drain off them ; but the middle of the road was hollowed out. There was plenty of space on each side the highway, and the drivers of the waggons and carts found it easier to make their way along the roadsides rather than follow the road itself. And then there were bridges to be crossed. Happily the benefactors of olden days, merchants and monks, had built strong stone bridges over many of our rivers. Guilds had been formed to erect and keep in repair bridges, and to provide a guild chapel on the bridge with a priest to pray with and succour travellers. Noble handsome structures they were, and still many remain witnessing to " the fair work and square " of the mediæval masons. They were narrow and not intended for vehicular traffic, but for the passage of pack-horses and riders. Here and there are little excrescences or places jutting out from the parapet,

wherein passengers could take refuge when a string of pack-horses or a cart passed along the bridge. As the funds of the guilds had been appropriated by the greedy commissioners of King Edward VI on the ground of "superstitious" uses, there was no money to keep them in repair; but they were so substantially built that they had not suffered much in Shakespeare's day; but the wooden structures stretched across stone piers or made entirely of timber with no parapets were not very safe. You remember how the foul fiend led poor Tom "through fire and through ford—made him so proud of heart to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges."[1]

But if the roads were bad and travelling dangerous there were many good inns by the way. Harrison says:[2] "Those towns we call thoroughfares have great and sumptuous inns in them for the receiving of such travellers and strangers to pass to and fro. The manner of harbouring wherein is not like to that of some other countries, in which the host or goodman of the house doth challenge a lordly authority over his guests, but clean otherwise, since every man may use his inn as his own house in England, and have for his money how great or little variety of victuals, and what other service he himself shall think expedient to call for." Therein the worthy parson echoes the words of Falstaff,

[1] *King Lear*, Act IV, scene 3.
[2] *Description of England*, Pt. 2, ch. 16, p. 107.

" Shall I not take mine ease at his inn ? " He tells us that the inns were well furnished with napery, bedding and tapestry. Table linen was washed daily, and every guest had clean sheets. The guest did not pay for putting up a horse. He had a key to his room and could keep it as long as he stayed there. The host was answerable for his guests' goods, so that there was no greater security anywhere for travellers than in the greatest inns in England.

But this does not seem to have extended to the stable, where ostlers stole the horses' corn and were in league with the tapsters and robbers. Either the ostler or the chamberlain would find out whether the guest carried money or valuables, and then inform highwaymen who would relieve the traveller of any superfluous wealth, " to the utter undoing of many an honest yeoman by the way."

These inns must have been very large, as some of them could provide lodging for 200 or 300 persons and their horses, and procure food for them on the shortest notice. The inns of London are reported to have been the worst in England ; but yet they were better than those to be found in foreign countries.

Fynes Moryson, who travelled much along our English roads, gives a very favourable account of the inns of the Shakespearean period.[1] He wrote :

[1] *Itinerary*, 1617, Part 3, p. 151. The spelling of the passage is modernised.

"The world affords not such Inns as England hath, either for good and cheap entertainment after the guest's own pleasure, or for humble attendance on passengers; yea, even in very poor villages. . . . For as soon as a passenger comes to an Inn, the servants run to him, and one takes his horse and walks him till he be cold, then rubs him and gives him meat, yet I must say that they are not much to be trusted in this last point, without the eye of the master or his Servant to oversee them. Another Servant gives the passenger his private chamber, and kindles his fire; the third pulls off his boots, and makes them clean. Then the Host or Hostess visit him; and if he will eat with the Host, or at a common table with others, his meal will cost him sixpence, or in some places but fourpence (yet this course is less honourable, and not used by Gentlemen); but if he will eat in his chamber, he commands what meat he will, according to his appetite, and as much as he thinks fit for him and his company, yea, the kitchen is open to him, to command the meat to be dressed as he best likes; and when he sits at table, the Host or Hostess will accompany him, or, if they have many guests, will at least visit him, taking it for courtesy to be bid sit down; while he eats, if he have company especially, he shall be offered music, which he may freely take or refuse; and if he be solitary, the musicians will give him the good day with music in the morning. It is the custom, and no way disgraceful, to set up part of supper for his breakfast. In the evening or in the morning after breakfast (for the common sort used not to dine but ride from breakfast to supper-time, yet coming

early to the Inn for better resting of their Horses), he shall have a reckoning in writing, and if it seem unreasonable, the Host will satisfy him either for the due price, or by abating part, especially if the servant deceive him any way, which one of experience will soon find. . . . I will now only add, that a Gentleman and his man shall spend as much as if he were accompanied with another Gentleman and his man; and if Gentlemen will in such sort join together to eat at one table, the expenses will be much diminished. Lastly, a man cannot more freely command at home in his own House, than he may do in his Inn; and at parting, if he give some few pence to the Chamberlain and Ostler, they wish him a happy journey."

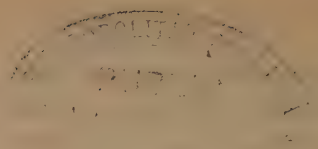
No wonder that these inns by the wayside had many attractions. When greeted by such kind, gracious hosts and hostesses, travellers welcomed each friendly inn with its swinging sign before the door supported by some well-wrought ironwork fashioned by the village blacksmith, who worked in his smithy hard by, ready to shoe the horses of the guests. Unhappily Englishmen of Shakespeare's time had lost the good reputation of their sires, who had earned a good character for sobriety. Camden declares that Englishmen were the most sober of the Northern nations, but a sad change has come about, and Camden attributes their deterioration to the long wars in the Netherlands, where they "first learnt to drown themselves with immoderate drinking, and by drinking others'

healths to impair their own." The London of Shakespeare was a drunken London, and in the country the vice was quite as prevalent. "That severe castigator of the faults of his age, Philip Stubbes, in his *Anatomie of Abuses*, is constantly inveighing against this sin. He wrote that every inn was crowded from morn till night with the most determined drunkards. We cannot accept all that Stubbes wrote as accurate, and Harrison declares that drunkenness had decreased; but there were abundant grounds for his accusations. Rabelais describes a man overcome with drink as being "as drunk as an Englishman." Massinger asserts in his play, the *Grand Duke of Florence*, that an Englishman "will drink more in two hours than the Dutchman or the Dane in four and twenty." James I, though by no means an example of sobriety, tried to improve matters, and an Act was passed in his first reign pointing out that the use of inns was for the accommodation of travellers, and were not meant for "entertaining and harbouring of lewd idle people, to spend and consume their time and their money in lewd and drunken manner."

Kemp (the original performer of Dogberry), who performed a morris dance from London to Norwich and wrote an account of his journey, *Nine Days' Wonder*, printed in 1600, gives so wonderful an account of the innkeeper at Rockland, that it is thought that it must have been written by his

friend and fellow-player, Shakespeare. He may vie with our host of the Tabard.

" He was a man not over spare,
In his eybals dwelt no care :
Anon, Anon, and *Coming, friend,*
Were the most words he used to spend :
Save, sometimes he would sit and tell
What wonders once in Bullayne fell ;
Closing each period of his tale
With a full cup of nut-brown ale.
Turwyn and Turney's siege was hot,
Yet all my hoast remembers not :
Ket's field and Musseleborough pray,
Were battles fought but yesterday.
O, 'twas a goodly matter then
To see your sword and buckler men,'
etc., etc.
Saint Martin, send him merry mates
To enter at his hostry gates !
For a blither lad than he
Cannot an Innkeeper be."



IX

SHAKESPEARE'S JOURNEY TO LONDON

DRIVEN away from Stratford by domestic troubles and by the persecution of Sir Thomas Lucy,[1] Shakespeare took the road and started on his adventurous journey to London to seek his fortune. Already his youthful heart had been fired by the love of the drama. Companies of players had often performed in his native town, and at Coventry and elsewhere he had seen them act ; he had doubtless made friends with individual members of the actors, and therefore when the home life had been left behind he would not unlikely seek them out and try to enter the profession.

There are two main roads from Stratford to London. That on the right hand led the way over Edge Hill, through Drayton, Banbury, Buckingham, Aylesbury, Amersham and Uxbridge. The other road ran through Shipston, Long Compton, Woodstock, Oxford, High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and

[1] Mrs. Stopes maintains that he could not have been driven from home in consequence of stealing Lucy's deer, as Sir Thomas Lucy had then no park to steal deer from, and suggests that he came to London in connection with a lawsuit against John Lambert. *Burbage and Shakespeare's Stage*, p. 54.

Uxbridge; or by an alternative route he may have travelled by the Henley Road from Oxford to Uxbridge and then through Holborn, entering the City of London by Newgate. Aubrey seems to imply that the poet commonly used this western route, as he was accustomed to stay at the Crown Inn at Oxford, where he was very friendly with Mistress Davenant, the hostess.[1] We will travel along this route with him. It must have been a new world of adventure upon which he was entering, perhaps not with a light heart, feeling a sense of injustice, that everything had gone wrongly with him, a knowledge of capability and even genius if only he had opportunity for accomplishing great things. He was glad that the old life, a little sordid, reckless and foolish, was over, and that he could now start again and win his way in spite of all.

It was early morning as he crossed the old bridge. The mists were rising from Avon River. Cattle were lowing in the fields as if to bid him farewell, and the larks were singing in the upper air, as if to encourage him to hope. Every bush was alive with the song of birds; from every hedge and tree the tender green was bursting. Amidst this gay pageant of young life it was not possible for him to be depressed.

After passing Bridge Town he must have been uncertain which road he should choose. We will

[1] Sir William Davenant, Poet Laureate, used to boast that Shakespeare was his sire.

imagine that he turned to the right along a familiar way, past Atherstone, and Preston on the River Stour, which are both a little to the west of the main road, and then walked on to Alderminster, the name of which betokens an ancient monastic church; which had not then degenerated into the sorry condition it fell into in later times.[1] Further on he came to Halford with its fine manor house, and then following the course of the Stour to Eltington, the home of the Shirleys, a very ancient family, who were there in Shakespeare's time and perhaps refreshed him as he passed. They had been there before William the Conqueror came, still hold the manor, and have an honourable history which invites us to linger there; but our poet is impatient to press onwards, and we must perforce follow him.

The next village through which he passed was Tredington, where the noble church spire and tower attracted his gaze and reminded him of his church at Stratford. If he entered the building he would have passed under a Norman doorway and admired the piers of the same date, the fine fourteenth-century chancel, and perhaps knelt in the Lady Chapel and sought a blessing on his journey. The

[1] Dining at the Author's Club two years ago I heard Sir Lewis Dibden, Dean of Arches, describe some of the curious revelations of his Court records, and amongst these is a terrible account of the misdeeds of the Vicar of Alderminster in 1666, who desecrated his church ornaments and utensils by turning them into domestic uses, hunted, smoked, frequented ale-houses, played games on Sundays and boasted a friendship with Oliver Cromwell.

old mediæval pews are still there, but the Jacobean pulpit is later than the poet's time. He would, however, have seen the splendid fifteenth-century screen and the altar with its five crosses in the vestry, and the chests and the brasses and much else that would have pleased his eye. And then on he tramped to Shipston-on-Stour, and his way was hindered by thousands of sheep that were being driven to the sheep-market, which was the greatest in the kingdom.

And here I may digress and tell you of the sheep and other cattle that Shakespeare knew.

CATTLE IN ENGLAND

England possessed a very excellent breed of sheep which for "sweetness of flesh" and wool surpassed all other countries. Harrison assures us that if Jason had known their value he would have come to Britain for sheep and never gone to Colchis. We English folk are fools, he thinks (an accusation that has been made in much later times), because we seek to deprive ourselves of this superiority by sending our rams and ewes to foreign countries. How blind we are! But such is our nature! We see no inconvenience until we feel it, and care only for present gain without considering the damage done to our posterity. However, foreigners driven by persecution from their own lands have taught us to use our wool in other ways besides simply the

making of cloth and woollen, and have produced "mockados, baies, vellures, grograinas, etc.," to our great profit. Every farmer kept sheep, and some of the principal sheepmasters as many as 20,000. Rot was rather prevalent. Ewes' milk greatly improved cheese.

Our great store of cattle exceeded that of any other country. We had more horses, oxen, sheep, goats, and swine, and these were better in quality than any foreign cattle. Our oxen were larger in bone, our horses pleasanter to ride, our cows better milkers, our sheep provided better wool, our pigs better bacon and our goats were more profitable. Cows were used for milking and ploughing. Our oxen have great bodies and were the best in Europe. The graziers were very cunning and capable and became very rich, riding in velvet coats and having chains of gold. The horns of our oxen were larger than those of any other country, and were sometimes increased by art, the graziers annointing the budding horns of young oxen with honey.

Our horses were not so tall as some of those in foreign lands, but they had a very easy pace, and our cart horses were very fine and large and strong. Five or six could draw a ton and a half. A packhorse could carry 4 cwt. We had no asses and therefore no mules. I am sorry to have to report that the reputation of horse-dealers in Shakespeare's time was not better than in our own. They were the biggest rogues and knaves alive, and Harrison

describes some of their tricks at the great horse-fairs at Ripon, Newport Pond, Wolfpit, Harborrow, etc. Foreign horses were much imported, such as the jennet of Spain, "lusty, young and proud" (as Shakespeare describes it), the courser of Naples, the hobby of Ireland, the Flemish "roile" and the Scottish nag. Henry VIII founded a splendid stud of horses and improved the breed. Of the sheep I have already written; goats were plentiful, especially in Wales and rocky hill-country, and pigs were excellent. Master Harrison did not approve of women scouring clothes with hogs' dung, and could not abide to wear such on his body. Brawn was not known abroad; and a French gentleman who received a present from an English friend of pickled brawn thought it was fish and reserved it for his Lenten fare. Greatly liking it he asked for more, but happily his conscience was not troubled, as he remained in ignorance of its quality. Brawn was the staple dish for the beginning of dinner, and as it is somewhat hard to digest, it was washed down by a draught of malmsey. The mysteries of its cooking I shall refrain from disclosing.

We left our poet contemplating the sheep at Shipston, which probably derives its name from the concourse of the animals at the great fairs, and must hurry on with him up the steep hills from Long Compton to the Rollright stones, where weird stories of witches and the evil eye linger on, and were current enough in the sixteenth century. Perhaps on

this desolate spot he conceived the gaunt figures of the witches in *Macbeth*, as he gazed upon the great circle of unhewn monoliths, the solitary King Stone and the group of whispering knights. It is the same story of "vaunted ambition that doth o'erleap itself." A king with his army is marching in far-off Neolithic times, seeking glory and a throne. A witch meets him and cries :

> " If Long Compton thou canst see
> King of England thou shalt be."

The king thinks success assured, and calls exultingly,

> " Stick, stock, stone,
> As King of England I shall be known."

So he takes seven strides forward, but lo ! and behold ! instead of his looking down on Long Compton there rises before him the long mound of earth which still stands before the King Stone, and the witch chuckles and cries :

> " As Long Compton thou canst not see,
> King of England thou shalt not be.
> Rise up, stick, and stand fast, stone,
> For King of England thou shalt be none ;
> Thou and thy men hoar stones shall be
> And I myself an eldern-tree."

Immediately the king and his army were turned into stones where they stood, the king on the side of the mound, and the army in a circle behind him, and also the whispering knights who were forming a conspiracy against their sovereign. The witch became, as she prophesied, an elder tree, who

watches over the victims of her magic. You can tell whether a woman is a witch and defy her spells by causing her to bleed. Talbot says to the Maid of France in *Henry VI*, "Blood I will draw on thee; thou art a witch." So the elder tree bleeds when it is cut, and the spell of her witchcraft vanishes. Fairies dance around the King Stone at night. "They were little folks like girls to look at," said an old man now dead. His widow, whose mother had been murdered as a witch, used to put a stone over a hole to keep the fairies in at night, but it was always turned over in the morning. Girls used to put their ears to the "Whispering Knights," to hear them whispering and to learn their fortunes. Witchcraft was prevalent everywhere in Elizabethan and Jacobean times, and stern persecution raged against hapless old women. I shall have more to say about them later on. Shakespeare often mentions witches and witchcraft in his plays, and he may have slept at night beneath the shade of this cromlech circle, and heard the whispering of the knights and seen the fairies' court, Titania, Peaseblossom and the rest dancing around the Stone King.

The road takes us eastward of Chipping Norton, where stood a castle, and where we will rest awhile and see the mounds behind the church that mark the site of the mediæval fortress. When the poet stayed there the town had not received its first charter, for which it had to wait until James I granted it;

but it had a guild, and he noted the old guild hall, and the remarkably fine church, still the glory of the Oxfordshire town. Perhaps he discovered that *chepynge*, or chipping, signified a market and that this prefix was added to the town's old name of Norton to signify that it had a famous market first granted to the lord of the town, William Fitz Alan, in 1205. It is a wonderful road this road of Shakespeare's travel. On his right lay the mysterious secrets of Wychwood Forest, and close at hand the Hoar at Enstone, relic of primeval days and primitive folk, and a little further on Grime's Dyke, or Devil's Ditch, that speaks of the buried past, of tribal boundaries and mysterious peoples, some of whose bones lie hidden in a tumulus we pass. And then across the Akeman Street we go, and think of the Romans and their imperial rule, their power, their roads, their camps and cities. They pass—all pass—" our little life is bounded by a sleep "—and so musing we come to Woodstock with its glove-making and its old manor-house. Gloriana in her young days had been kept a close prisoner therein, and envied the freedom of a poor milkmaid who was " singing pleasantlie," and there she had studied her books and cultivated astrology under the tuition of the celebrated Dr. Dee. Milkmaids of the period seem to have been very attractive. Here is a description of

> " A fair and happy milkmaid
> The queen of curds and cream,"

as the poet dubs her in *Winter's Tale* (Act IV, scene 4). It was written by Sir Thomas Overbury, Shakespeare's contemporary :[1]

" A fair and happy milkmaid is a country wench, that is so far from making herself beautiful by art, that one look of hers is able to put all face-physic out of countenance. She knows a fair look is but a dumb orator to commend virtue, therefore minds it not. All her excellencies stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel (which is herself) is far better than outsides of tissue : for though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silkworm, she is decked in innocency, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long abed, spoil both her complexion and conditions. Nature hath taught her too immoderate sleep is rust to the soul. She rises therefore with chanticleer, her dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew. In milking a cow, and straining the teats through her fingers, it seems that so sweet a milk-press makes the milk the whiter or sweeter ; for never came almond glove or aromatic ointment on her palm to taint it. The golden ears of corn fall and kiss her feet when she reaps them, as if they wished to be bound and led prisoners by the same hand that felled them. Her breath is her own, which scents all the year long of June, like a new-made hay-cock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pity : and when winter evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheel) she sings a defiance to the giddy wheel of fortune. She doth all things with so sweet

[1] *Characters* (1614–16).

a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well. She bestows her year's wages at next fair; and in choosing her garments, counts no bravery in the world like decency. The garden and bee-hive are all her physic and chirurgery, and she lives the longer for it. She dares go alone and unfold sheep in the night, and fears no manner of ill, because she means none: yet to say truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts and prayers, but short ones; yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not palled with ensuing idle cogitations. Lastly, her dreams are so chaste, that she dare tell them; only a Friday's dream is all her superstition: that she conceals for fear of anger. Thus lives she, and all her care is she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet."

Another eight miles' tramp brings us to Oxford. Tired and weary we enter by St. Giles, with St. John's College on our left, the famous, wondrous city "*Oxonium*, Oxford, the famed Athens of England," as the foreign visitor, Hentzner, calls it; "that glorious seminary of learning and wisdom, whence religion, politeness and letters are abundantly dispersed into all parts of the kingdom." He considered that the colleges and halls for the beauty of their buildings, their rich endowments and copious libraries, excel all the academies in the Christian world. It is difficult for us to imagine the feelings of the poet as he entered the wondrous Oxford.

And yet tragedy was mingled with its beauty. There is the place where a few years ago the Marian martyrs, Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops Ridley and Latimer, were burnt at the stake, set up in Broad Street, the two latter on October 16th, 1555, and the Archbishop on March 21st, 1556. St. Mary Magdalen's Church looked down upon the scene. Its nave and tower looked new, as it had been recently rebuilt by Henry VIII with some of the old materials brought from Bewley Abbey. A little further on the poet walked under the north gate of the city, over which was the Bocardo Prison, wherein the martyred prelates had been incarcerated. This gate was very large and strong, with towers on either side, and was backed by another gate. There was a stout portcullis and a military engine over it "to let down anything obnoxious to the enemy approaching thereunto." Two great folding doors barred the way, made strong with bars of iron nailed upon them, and "there were battlements, statues and arms thereon, which afforded great delight to strangers that came that way," as the Rev. Sir John Peshall has recorded.

And so we pass into the Cornmarket Street. On the left is St. Martin's Church, the oldest church in Oxford, with its old Saxon tower; and on the right are the hospitable doors of the Crown Inn, where the smiling hostess, Mistress Davenant, greets us with a hearty welcome.

And so to supper and to bed.

X

THE UNIVERSITIES

MISTRESS DAVENANT had much to tell the poet about the affairs of Oxford, and of the several visits of Queen Elizabeth, who loved the city with a whole-hearted affection. When she left the cavalcade of students, dons and citizens at Shotover Hill, looking back at the fair city of towers and spires, she exclaimed: "Farewell, farewell, dear Oxford! God bless thee! and increase thy sons in number, holiness and virtue." The kindly hostess recounted that as a child she had witnessed the strange funeral of poor Amy Robsart a quarter of a century before, told of the slow building of a new college for Welshmen, Jesus College, and wondered why Welshmen wanted to come to Oxford, of the horrid plague that broke out a dozen years ago, and how quite recently there had been a Gaol Fever in the prison that carried off 300 men, and how it was all the fault of Rowland Jenkes, a bookseller of the city, who had dared to utter calumny against the good Queen, whom Heaven preserve. But people were getting

wickeder and wickeder every day, and were plotting against her majesty, and the Roman Catholics were carrying off many young Oxford lads to Douay and Rome and making priests of them to send back and make England Roman and to kill the Queen. There was Cuthbert-Mayne of St. John's, and Campian of the same, and Sherwin of Exeter College, all nice-spoken gentlemen, who had often visited the Crown, and they had all been hanged, drawn and quartered. These were terrible times.

So the landlady of the Crown related her news. In the meantime we will look round the city and try to discover the state of the University in the Shakespearean age. We cannot have a better guide than the Rev. Canon Harrison, who was a graduate of both Universities. Comparing the two, he says that Oxford standeth most pleasantly ringed with woods on the surrounding hills and watered with rivers in the vales. Cambridge is too near the fens which poison the air. The Oxford colleges and streets are better than those of Cambridge, being more stately, magnificent and commodious, but the buildings of the sister University have greater uniformity and compactness. The townsfolk of both places like to annoy the students and charge high prices, and Town and Gown rows were not unknown in Elizabethan times. Both towns have castles. Harrison praises the architecture of the Divinity School at Oxford, as being of fine and excellent workmanship, and considers that it comes

next to King's Chapel at Cambridge, which two with King Henry VII's chapel at Westminster are the three most notable buildings in Europe. He might have added a fourth, St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

English University life differed entirely from that of foreign Universities. The colleges are under such strict disciplinary rule that Erasmus thought that the life of students differed little from that of monks and was, indeed, stricter. There were large numbers of students, as many as 3000, who were supported either by their colleges or by their rich friends. There had been changes in the status of the scholars. The colleges were founded originally for poor men's sons, but the rich had encroached upon them, so that it was difficult for a poor man to gain a fellowship. I am sorry to state that in Grammar Schools bribery prevailed, so that poor men's children were prevented from coming to Oxford; rich students received the scholarships and then spent their time in reading stories, gambling and idleness, so that they bring disgrace upon the University. They swagger about in gay clothing, frequent riotous company, and for an excuse plead that they are gentlemen.

Each college had its professors and tutors of languages and several sciences, who trained the youths privately, and then after twelve terms the scholars went to the common schools and public disputations to try their skill. Five professors or readers were provided by princes for the instruction

in Divinity, civil law, physic, Hebrew and Greek. Public lectures were also given in philosophy, logic, rhetoric and quadrinials (which term seems to have included arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy, subjects that were much neglected) by professors provided by the University. These professors controlled the exercises for the degrees, and graduates were expected to wear a distinctive dress that marked them as grave and reverend men. The University course was protracted and required seven years. The first degree was that of sophisters; then after four years they proceeded to the B.A. degree, and then after another three years' study they attained to the degree of M.A. They could then rise to the rank of Doctor in the subjects they had chosen, but to become a D.D. required about eighteen to twenty years.

The professors at Oxford and Cambridge were as good as the best Continental ones. Every college had its Master, a President and Censors or Deans, who looked after the students and punished them severely for any breach of discipline. Such was the constitution of the University in Shakespeare's day. We will walk along the Oxford streets and notice the College buildings, many of which have been much altered since his time, and some of those we know so well were not then founded. Christ Church looked fairly new, having been built by Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII, but there was no Tom tower. The old church of St. Frideswide

had been shorn of much of its western portion and converted into the Cathedral of the new See of Oxford. Peckwater Quad was not there, but where Canterbury Gate now stands there was Canterbury College, where Wickliffe was once warden and Sir Thomas Moore a student. There was no Pembroke College. At Carfax was a large conduit and Carfax Church, both of which have vanished except the tower of the latter. Shakespeare never saw any of the present Oriel buildings, though the College was founded in 1326. Corpus was in existence, having been founded eighty years prior to his visit. Merton shone forth in all its glory of mediæval architecture, and the great southern quadrangle was built in the poet's time (1610), though subsequent to our pilgrimage. The present front of St. Alban Hall he would not recognise, as it has been renewed in modern times. Magdalen, with its fifteenth-century buildings, looked then as charming as it does to-day. Queen's was rebuilt in the early eighteenth century, and University in 1634–74. All Souls' (1438–42) and St. Mary's Church must have delighted his eyes. Not much of Balliol, Trinity and Exeter that Shakespeare saw remains. Lincoln's Hall and Library belong to his period, and Brazenose was only about seventy-five years old. During a subsequent visit of the poet he must have seen the building of the Bodleian Library, though the Radcliffe was still unknown. Wykeham's famous foundation of New College was then

in its prime, and Wadham saw the light three years before the poet died. The west quadrangle of St. John's looked out on St. Giles's, but Laud's additions were not yet made. Worcester was then known as Gloucester Hall.

The comparison between the life of Oxford students and that of monks is also made by Hentzner. He says: "These students lead a life almost monastic, for as the monks had nothing in the world to do, but when they had said their prayers at stated hours, to employ themselves in instructive studies, no more have these. They are divided into three Tables: the first is called the Fellows' Table, to which are admitted Earls, Barons, Gentlemen, Doctors and Masters of Arts, but few of the latter; this is more expensively served than the others: the second is for Masters of Arts, Bachelors, some Gentlemen and eminent Citizens: the third for people of low condition." During dinner a student read aloud the Bible, placed on a desk in the middle of the Hall. After grace they retired to their chamber or walked in the College garden, which was attached to every college. In Greene's play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, a speaker tells how

> "these Oxford schools
> Are richly seated near the river-side:
> The mountains full of fat and fallow deer,
> The battling pastures lade with kine and flocks,
> The town gorgeous with high-built colleges,
> And scholars seemly in their grave attire
> Learned in searching principals of art."

Hentzner compares their habit with that of the Jesuits, their gowns reaching down to their ankles, and sometimes lined with fur, the caps square, while the Doctors, Masters and Professors had another kind of gown. Every college had a library, to which each student had a key. At Cambridge, and also at Oxford, each room had accommodation for two fellows or four scholars.

Harrison mentions several Halls, or Hostels—Brodegates, Hart Hall, Magdalen Hall, Alburne Hall, Postminster, St. Mary Hall, White Hall, New Inn and Edmond Hall; wherein the students had more liberty than in the colleges. They were called hostellers, or halliers, and he mentions that Archbishop Cranmer was educated at such a Cambridge Hall, and that the ignorant London folk, hearing that he was a "hosteller," supposed that he had been an ostler at an inn, and hung up bottles of hay at his Palace Gate when he adopted the views of the Reformation party. Besides these halls there were ruins of many other hostels, such as Beef Hall, Mutton Hall and sundry ancient dwellings where students in olden days had lodged.

We may gather, then, that the appearance of the Oxford Shakespeare knew was very different from that which we know to-day. There had been great changes in recent years in the University and much controversy. The everlasting question of the teaching of Greek had been much agitated in early Tudor times as it has in recent years. Theological

disputes had taken the place of study. Royal Commissioners had descended upon Oxford, introducing new rules and curricula. The monasteries in pre-Reformation times had fed the University with promising students, and their destruction had for a time been grievously felt. Scholasticism had been driven out by a forcible hand. But ere the sixteenth century had passed away Oxford was recovering itself. That was evinced by the number of students who flocked to it as their Alma Mater, and by the influence which the University exercised upon Society in general. But these are large questions and are beyond the scope of this present book.

. . . . . .

I do not propose to follow the Bard along the rest of his way to London; though the road is tempting and there are many attractions. We have still to travel far, if we are to note all the special features of Shakespeare's England, and to sketch the country as we go. I may mention a little village in the delectable county of Bucks, Grendon-Underwood, which is associated with the poet. Aubrey mentions that when he was travelling on foot to London and in poverty, he slept in the porch of the church, and was there discovered by the village constable, who accused him of stealing the church's goods, and raised the alarm. He demanded to be searched, and when nothing was discovered, he

exclaimed, "Much ado about nothing," a phrase that came in useful later on. It is suggested that this village constable was the prototype of Dogberry and Verges, who are said to speak pure Buckinghamshire. I have visited "Shakespeare Farm" in the village, formerly the Ship Inn, where the poet is said to have stayed and written some of his plays, and so persistent is the local tradition that they point you to the one original "bank whereon the wild thyme grows."

XI

MANSIONS AND MANOR-HOUSES

SHAKESPEARE'S age was an age of building. He must often have witnessed the masons and carpenters at work. It was an age when so many of our noble English mansions were being erected, an age that gave birth to Hatfield, Longleat, Audley End, Chatsworth, Hardwick and many other of the grandest English seats. It was an age of great architects: of John Thorpe (whose designs you may still study preserved in the Soane Museum, or better still in some of his masterpieces), of Bernard Adams, Bradshaw and Huntingdon Smithson. There were many others who wrought well and worthily—Rodolph Simmons, who built colleges at Cambridge, Richard Lea, John Shute, Stickles, Theodore Havens, who designed the famous gates at Caius College, Cambridge, and Thomas Holte, who built the curious Tower of the Schools Quadrangle at Oxford. Shakespeare often saw the scaffolding erected and the builders at work. You will remember the poet's words—

" When we mean to build,
We first survey the plot, then draw the model,
And when we see the figure of the house,
Then must we rate the cost of the erection,
Which if we find outweighs ability
What do we then, we draw anew the model
In fewer offices, or, at least, desist
To build at all.

All the country squires, the newly enriched city merchants, or the *nouveaux riches* who had enriched themselves with the spoils of the monasteries, or been blown by lucky gales into the sunshine of Court favour—all these were building: some great palaces such as Wollaton, or Burghley House, or Holland House; others, those charming manor-houses that stud the country-side, set in a framework of dark trees in sequestered villages and obscure hamlets.

The Elizabethan age was a period of great change and progress in house-building. New fashions had set in. The Renaissance, that great intellectual reawakening which took place in the fifteenth century, revolutionising Western Europe, had set its seal on English life, though its progress was slower than in Italy and France. It was the intellectual, moral, spiritual and artistic rebirth of Europe, and began to be felt first in Italy, whence men looked for its inspiration. The old mediæval order of things had passed away. In all ways English folk were striking out new paths for themselves. There was a feeling of freedom in the air. There were many abuses; plague, misery and death stalked abroad; but

there was a real expansion of ideas and a development in art and life.

We English are a conservative people and are slow to embrace new ideas. Henry VIII and Wolsey had imported Italian workmen. Many of them were employed in the work of decorating and embellishing houses, in making great tombs, such as that of Henry VII in Westminster Abbey, terra-cotta busts and images, and monuments adorned with classical details and Renaissance art. Foremost among these Italian artists was Torrigiano, who was employed at Hampton Court and in the construction of the aforesaid monument at Westminster; and there were others, Rovezzano and Giovanni da Majone and many other Italian workmen who were engaged in decorating pure English work, not in the building and construction of houses. Their reign was very transitory. Henry VIII was not very popular—to say the least of it—in Italy. His son had no vast wealth to spend on building palaces, and the Italians withdrew; and though some of their influence remained as to detail and ornament, the native style asserted itself. Foreign competition was not, however, eliminated, and Renaissance ideals somewhat diffused by Flemish and German interpretation began to force themselves upon our English minds. Englishmen clung to their Gothic traditions. The English masons who carried out the work, liked not foreign notions. Hence arose the Elizabethan style, call it

mongrel, if you will, formed by grafting the exotic plant upon the old native stock. And this when done by skilful gardeners—the very able architects of the period—produced a healthy and vigorous growth.

The Armada had been overthrown. The feudal power of great nobles with armies of retainers had vanished. Fortified dwellings were no longer needed. No gloomy walls and serried battlements were required to resist a foe. So great men built no more castles, but were able to "sacrifice strength to convenience and security to sunshine." Instead of the barbaric splendour of the fortress, there arose the pomp and grace of the Elizabethan hall, the stately mansion, and the picturesque manor-house. Flemish and German artisans were brought over to rear the great houses, and (as I have said in another book)[1] to load them with bastard Italian Renaissance detail. Nothing could be worse than some of these vast structures, with their distorted gables, their chaotic proportions and their crazy interpretation of classic orders. Contrast these vast piles with the typical Tudor manor-house, the means of the builders of which, or their good taste, would not permit of such a profusion of these architectural luxuries, and you will discover the far greater attractiveness of the humbler dwelling. It is unequalled in its combination of stateliness with homeliness, in its expression of the manner of life of the men who built it.

[1] *Manor-houses of England.*

Let us look at one of these vast piles, the largest of them all when it stood in all its full glory, before time and decay and the ruthless hand of Sir John Vanbrugh robbed it of half its magnificence. Audley End was built by Thomas, Earl of Suffolk, Lord Treasurer of England in the reign of James I, who came to visit him and congratulated him on having been able to build a much finer house than the King himself could afford. This was uttered not without an *arrière pensée*, as the Treasurer was not only fond of extravagance and show, but was charged with embezzlement, deprived of his office and severely fined. Audley End was begun in 1603, and took thirteen years to build. A model was sent from Italy, which cost £500, and the whole structure entailed an expenditure of £190,000. The character of the building is essentially Jacobean, which implies that along with Italian details there is a strong flavour of English workmanship and arrangement, a flavour that could only have been imported by English designers and would never have been taught on Italian soil.[1] The main building, most of which still remains, was arranged round a court, but there was also a great outer quadrangle which was first entered through a central archway. This great court was surrounded by buildings less in height than the inner court, had on each side an arcade, and at the upper end, opposite the entrance, a

[1] *Journal of British Archæological Association*, Vol. XIX, Pt. 2, p. 203, and a monograph by Mr. Gotch.

paved terrace, whence two porches led into the main building. On the garden side two wings projected, one of which was occupied by the chapel. The gallery was 226 feet in length. The exterior was of fine wrought stone, with columns and other decorative designs of marble. Mr. W. Niven thinks that Bernard Jansen was the architect, but Mr. Gotch attributes it to the famous John Thorpe, the builder of Longleat, Hatfield, Holland House and many other mansions. It is suggested that he was identical with "John of Padua." The destruction of this immense pile began in 1721, when on the advice of Sir John Vanbrugh, the Earl of Suffolk pulled down the whole of the principal court, and further mutilation soon followed. In 1729 the east wing was pulled down and the long gallery, and the great house was reduced to its present size. It is still a magnificent building and we can admire the largely-designed ceiling over the staircase, the contorted strap-work in the ceiling of the small library and the beautifully-modelled ceiling of the saloon; but Audley End is too magnificent, the details are clumsy, and were probably wrought by German hands, though the plan of the building is essentially English.

The traditional style upon which the Elizabethan plan was based is well described by Andrew Boorde in his *Dyetorie or Regiment of Health*, published in 1547. He wrote:

"Marke the hall of such a fashion that the

THE HALL, AUDLEY END

parlour be annexed to the head of the hall; and the buttrye and pantrye at the lower end thereof. The cellar under the pantrye set somewhat at a base, the kechyn sette somewhat at base from the buttrye and pantrye, coming with an entrye within by the wall of the buttrye; the pastrie house and the larder annexed to the kechyn. Then divide the logginge by the circuit of the quadrinal courte, and let the gatehouse be opposite or against the hall doore, not directly, but the hall doore standing abase of the gatehouse, in the middle of the front enteringe of the place. Let the privye chamber be annexed to the great chamber of estate, with other chambers necessary for the buildinge, so that many of the chambers may have a prospect into the chapell."

This last requisite is literally carried out at Broughton Castle, so that several bedchambers look down upon the chapel, causing a witty bishop to say that for the first time he understood the words of the Psalmist when he sang "Let the saints rejoice in their beds." The old doctor, Andrew Boorde's description of a Tudor mansion, if you have patience to master the old spelling and the quaint language, will enable you to understand the usual plan of an early Tudor mansion. There is no idea of erecting a house capable of resisting the attack of an enemy. If it was built on the site of an earlier house there would be a moat, but this was filled in, at least on the side of the entrance; so that you could have ridden straight up to the

gatehouse without having to cross a drawbridge. There may have been an elegant stone bridge over the moat if it had not been drained. The gatehouse had two flanking towers, but there was no hostile or threatening appearance about them, and they were more for ornament than utility, except that they were often used for carrying stairs. There were sometimes towers or hexangular turrets at the angles of the quadrangular court, and these and the tall chimneys with their elaborate decorations were very characteristic of the earlier Tudor domestic architecture.

You knocked at the gate with the ponderous knocker, and were met by a single porter, and after having satisfied him with your harmlessness and respectability you entered the court, and were directed to the entrance of the house. You would observe on the right of the screens, or passage, the buttery, kitchen, pantry, etc., and the lodgings of the servants, on the left the hall, beyond which lay the parlour, with drawing-room and chambers devoted to the use of the family. Examples of this arrangement are seen in all the old houses of the Tudor period, and with regard to the buttery, you will remember Maria says to Sir Andrew Ague-cheek :

" Bring your hand to the buttery-bar and let in drink."

The hall was still the chief apartment as it was in mediæval times, when the family dined at the high

table set on the dais, and there was a large central hearth with a louvre over it, or a huge fireplace, and there were tables set on trestles for the retainers, and rushes on the floor, on which they slept. You remember when Capulet cries out :

> "A hall! a hall! give room and foot it, girls.
> More light, ye knaves, and turn the tables up,
> And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot."

The Elizabethan builders increased the accommodation of their houses without altering the general plan. They added a dining parlour so that the family could take their meals in private, and a servants' dining-room, with drawing-room, also a breakfast-room, and long gallery for exercise in wet weather, for balls and children's games, and an increased number of bedrooms. So the house became much more comfortable.

Sometimes there was a second courtyard, around which the domestic offices were grouped. At the dais end of the hall there was a large bay-window filled with stained glass showing the armorial bearings of the family and of those connected with it by ties of marriage or kinship. These houses presented, and happily still present, a most beautiful appearance with their picturesque line of gables, their fretted fronts, castellated gateways, their jutting oriels, their Italian gardens, their terraces with graceful steps leading to the lower gardens, their statuary, vases, fountains, mazes, their formal

beds, and lines of yews carefully cut and trimmed into shapes of birds and beasts.

I visited Knowle a short time ago and there saw the line of gables on the principal façade, with graceful carved heads, and on entering the first court opposite the entrance there is distinct evidence of Italian influence, a raised terrace and loggia with classical pillars and semicircular arches. Under this influence the Gothic pointed arches, whether accurately pointed or four-centred, had given way to the classical semicircular.

But all was not well with these Elizabethan houses, especially in the mansions of the great. The Italians had gone back to their sunny land, but we had other visitors to our shores whose work lacked the grace and perfection of the Italians. These were the Germans and the Flemings who had settled in England, driven here by terrible persecutions in their own lands, or invited by some nobleman who admired their workmanship. They introduced some terrible adornments and ornamentations into our homes. They were guilty of wild extravagance in art, and instead of the refined Italian work they brought coarse designs and crude mechanical methods, which were imposed upon the native art, but never was really assimilated with it. We see examples of their skill in the huge mantelpieces in our great mansions and in ponderous tombs. Under their influence the beautiful clustered chimney-stacks of the early Tudor period dis-

appeared, and the ugly use of columns for chimneys set in. Foreign pattern-books were imported containing strange and weird designs which the amateur architects, the squires and noblemen, copied when they were constructing a new house, or making a new staircase. They thought that these designs were the latest things in fashion, and therefore unhesitatingly adopted them, and unfortunately most of these pattern-books came from Germany and Holland, and not from Italy, which furnished better and more tasteful patterns.

These new Elizabethan houses revelled in more light than any of their predecessors. In dangerous mediæval days the buildings of the courtyard type had no windows on the outside, lest they should assist the enemy in an attack. Then, later on, the outside windows were small and narrow; but when security was more or less assured, they blossomed out into a useful size. Large oriel windows broke the surface of the walls and diffused light into the dwelling. Formerly the top of the windows were cusped and the mullions were splayed and moulded. Now they were made square-headed and had often mullions and transoms, the stonework being carved with arabesques, and sometimes had classic pilasters on each side.

The Elizabethan manor-house is often an architectural gem. The English traditional style was preserved, and it was not generally overloaded with foreign ornamentation. The house was usually

E shaped—that is to say, there was the main body with two wings and a porch with a room over it. Sometimes Renaissance details embellished the porch with classical pilasters, and an entablature at the summit. The squire's coat of arms usually appears over the doorway, with crest and supporters, as Shakespeare wrote in the *Midsummer Night's Dream :*

> " Two of the first, like coats of heraldry, due
> But to one, crowned with one crest."

Sometimes the house was planned in the form of the letter H, the wings at the side being extended both ways. Indeed, Thorpe devised the eccentric monogram house made on the plan H, which he explained by the rhyme :

> " Thus 2 letters I and T,
> Joined together as you see
> Is meant for a dwelling house for me."

I do not know whether he ever constructed such a house. Indeed, it is very uncertain whether he built many of the houses the plans of which appear in his collection still preserved in the Soane Museum. Mr. Reginald Blomfield maintains that he did not, but Mr. Gotch, F.S.A., the great authority on English domestic architecture, considers him to have been the leading architect of his age. Whether he built the houses or not, the plans are there, and they reveal some of the secrets of the style that was prevalent when Shakespeare lived. In the manor

or mansion he shows that the long gallery, the great and stately staircase which had taken the place of the narrow newel or circular one of an earlier age, and the abundance of windows, which Bacon inveighed against and which found its expression in

> " Hardwick Hall
> More glass than wall,"

were some of the distinguishing features of the Elizabethan style. Tall figures often adorned the balustrade of the staircase as at Aldermaston Court, where when the old house was burnt down they were removed to the new. Harrison tells us that the " walls of our houses on the inner sides in like sort be either hanged with tapestry, arras work, or painted cloths, wherein diverse histories, or herbs, beasts, knots and such like are stained, or else they are sealed with oak of our own, or wainscot brought hither out of the East countries, whereby the rooms are not a little commended, made warm, and much more close than otherwise they would be." Rushes were abandoned in parlours and carpets came into use.

Many houses were enriched with the spoils of religious houses. Shakespeare speaks occasionally of tapestry, though some of it was " worm-eaten." Some, he tells us, was imported from Turkey, and Gremio was proud of his Tyrian tapestry as well as of his cyprus chests, his arras counterpoints, his fine linen, Turkish cushions bossed with pearl,

his Venetian valence, his pewter and brass vessels that had taken the place of wooden platters. The heavy four-posted beds, in which, of course, Gloriana is sure to have slept, and tables and chairs of the period are not uncommon, and can still be seen in many old houses or collections of old furniture.

In Elizabethan times some of the old castles were still in their prime, and had not yet been besieged and battered by Cromwell's cannon, or sleighted when the Civil War was over. Warwick still looks proudly down on the town, and is full of the memories of the great "King-maker." Shakespeare knew it well, and it is not difficult to suppose that he derived his historical inspiration from gazing at this grand old pile of the noble Earls of Warwick. Kenilworth, now a ruin, was then in its prime, the residence of the Earl of Leicester who entertained the Queen so royally, and who had added some palatial buildings to the ancient fortress. All the people in the neighbourhood would flock to see the pageant, and there amongst the company would doubtless be John Shakespeare and his son who saw Proteus riding "on a dolphin's back" and remembered it for subsequent use. Sherborne Castle was the abode of Sir Walter Raleigh, and Bolton and Fotheringhay were the prisons of Mary Queen of Scots, and our Berkshire Donnington was strong enough a few years later to resist all the forces of the Parliament in its famous siege. These are only a tithe of the "relics of feudalism" that were

still habitable and where great nobles lived with some tokens of their former state, hunting in their parks and exercising some measure of sway over the surrounding districts.

The plan of the yeoman's house somewhat resembles that of the manor house, but is of simpler construction. It consisted of a hall with a parlour at one end and a kitchen at the other, with offices on the ground-floor and bed-chambers above. Many cottages were built in Queen Elizabeth's time owing to the change in the methods of farming, and the necessity for additional labour. Many of these remain, built of brick, timber or stone, according to the building material supplied by nature in the particular locality. The timber cottages were made of a wooden framework, the interstices being filled with " wattle and daub," formed by entwined laths covered with clay or plaster, and white-washed over. In the early days of the sixteenth century the upright timbers were placed close together, and this is a sign of early work ; while later on, when timber became scarcer, they were placed farther apart and the framework was strengthened by curved braces. Harrison tells us that there was a great increase in the erection of chimneys for these humble dwellings, and old men told him that in former times every man used to make his fire against a reredos in the hall, and the smoke found its way out of the doors and windows or through a hole in the roof. It would be pleasant

to dwell upon these English cottages and upon the whole story of the domestic architecture of the period, but that would require a volume, and I have already attempted to do this in some of my other books. We have other important features of English life in Shakespeare's time to study, and must pass on to "the next scenes of this eventful history."

XII

THE NAVY AND ARMY OF ENGLAND

HARRISON wrote his *Description of England* some years before the Armada sailed to destroy our country, but in his time he had reason to be proud of our navy.

"Certes," he wrote, "there is no prince in Europe that hath a more beautiful or gallant sort of ships than the queen's majesty of England at this present, and those generally are of such exceeding force, that two of them being well appointed and furnished as they ought, will not let to encounter with three or four of those of other countries, and either bowge them or put them to fight, if they may not bring them home." He tells us that the build of the ships was the best in the world for facing all kinds of weather, and that for strength, assurance, nimbleness and swiftness of sailing all foreigners were agreed that they surpassed all others.

There were when Harrison wrote twenty-four or twenty-five great ships, and the names of these were: *The Bonadventure, Elizabeth Jonas,*[1] *White-*

[1] So named by the Queen in remembrance of her deliverance from the fury of her enemies, as Jonah was preserved from the whale's belly.

Bear, Philip and Mary, Triumph, Bull, Tiger, Antelope, Hope, Lion, Victory, Marie Rose, Foresight, Swiftsute, Aid, Handmaid, Dreadnought,[1] *Genet* or *Jennett, Swallow, Burke of Bullen, Achates, Falcon, George, Revenge.* In the *Household Ordinances* of 1578 there are mentioned the *Cadish*, the *Primrose* and the *Falcon*, and we are informed that there were 135 ships besides those of 100 tons and upwards, 656 barques and ships of between 40 and 100 tons, 100 sail of hoyes, and an infinite number of small barques. It was customary to build one ship a year for the better defence of the country, and Harrison declares that if all the navy should be required for service at one instant (which God forbid) the Queen would have between nine and ten thousand seamen, besides the privately owned vessels which her subjects could supply.

Besides all these vessels the Queen had three choice galleys, the *Speedwell*, the *Try-right* and the *Black Galley*, and she took great delight in her navy, though alas! this did not prevent her from starving it, refusing to grant money for the proper equipment of the ships, and the providing of powder and the victualling of the men. Her commanders,

[1] It is interesting to note that this name of a famous class of modern battle-ships was in existence in Elizabethan days; and also that the *Lion*, *Tiger*, and *Victory* of our modern navy should then have prototypes, who doubtless accomplished deeds of daring against the Spaniards as their successors have done against the Germans. This list would furnish names for some of our modern ships if the Admiralty has difficulties in providing suitable nomenclature.

AN ELIZABETHAN GALLEON

From an old engraving

Sir John Hawkins, Lord Howard and others were often driven into despair by her parsimony. The ships owned by private subjects were very numerous, the number varying from two to sixteen for each of such shipowner who derived great gains therefrom. A ship of the first class when fitted was worth £1000 and a man-of-war £2000, which sum corresponded with about £12,000 of our money in the present day.

This naval force was only of gradual growth. In the earlier years of the Queen's reign the navy had been neglected. In her sire's time England had become a first-rate naval power and could muster fifty or sixty fighting vessels. But that power had been suffered to decline, and during the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign she could only provide a beggarly dozen. Private enterprise had supplied the deficiency and made England a terror to her enemies.

Our great navigators proved themselves bold, enterprising and resolute men, and such men as gallant Sir John Hawkins, Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, the Gilberts and John Davis, laid the foundations of our English maritime supremacy and made England the "Mistress of the Seas." The splendid achievement of the Elizabethan sailors began the formation of our colonial enterprise and raised England to a supremacy which she has never abdicated. She had to wrest the power from the Spaniard and the Portuguese, who were before her in the race. Bartholomew Diaz had doubled the

Cape of Good Hope. Vasco da Gama had sailed to India. Columbus had discovered the American continent. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa possessed the characteristics of Englishmen, "the man who knew not when he was beaten," and was the first white man to look upon the Pacific Ocean. These men revealed an El Dorado which filled the coffers of Spain with gold, and aroused the emulation of other nations to follow in their steps.

Richard Hakluyt, in his Epistle Dedicatory to his *Principal Navigations* (1589), thus records the achievements of our English explorers:

"To speak a word of that just commendation which our nation do indeed deserve: it cannot be denied, but as in all former ages, they have been men full of activity, stirrers abroad, and searchers of the remote parts of the world, so in this most famous and peerless government of her most excellent Majesty, her subjects through the special assistance and blessing of God, in searching the most opposite corners and quarters of the world, and to speak plainly, in compassing the vast globe of the earth more than once, have excelled all the nations and people of the earth. For, which of the kings of this land before her Majesty, had their banners ever seen in the Caspian Sea? which of them hath ever dealt with the Emperor of Persia, as her Majesty hath done, and obtained for her merchants large and loving privileges? who ever saw, before this regiment, an English leger in the stately porch of the Grand Signor at Constanti-

nople? who ever found English consuls and agents at Tripolis, in Syria, at Aleppo, at Babylon, at Balsara, and which is more, who ever heard of Englishmen at Goa before now? what English ships did heretofore ever anchor in the mighty river of Plate? pass and repass the unpassable (in former opinion) straits of Magellan, range along the coast of Chili, Peru and all the backside of Nova Hispania further than any Christian ever passed, traverse the mighty breadth of the South Sea, land upon the Luzones in despite of the enemy, enter into alliance, amity and traffic with the princes of the Moluccas and the Isle of Java, double the famous Cape of Bona Speranza, arrive at the Isle of Santa Helena, and last of all return home most richly laden with the commodities of China, as the subjects of this now flourishing monarchy have done?"

In this mighty struggle for supremacy the "Sea Dogs" of Devon played their glorious part. The most striking figure in the strange drama was Sir Francis Drake, "the Captain," as he was called by the Plymouth folk, who was supposed by the Spaniards to be in league with the devil, and whose drum sounds to lead his countrymen to victory whenever England is in danger. He and his glorious compatriots called into being our navy, the foundations of which had been laid by the prudent action of Henry VIII. Spain barred the progress of English liberties. Our people knew something of the character and conduct of her king, Philip II, the

consort of Mary Tudor, under whose direction the torture and burning of martyrs had been used to stamp out freedom, and who had done the like to our poor sailors fallen into his hands and been incarcerated in the hateful dungeons of the Inquisition. *Hispania est delenda* was the motto of the English seamen. They have been termed pirates, unauthorised buccaneers, many of them who fitted out their ships to cripple the power of Spain and to enrich themselves with the spoil taken from her galleons; but that was not their character. They thought that in robbing Spain they were doing their duty to God and their country, and in the hour of England's greatest danger they saved their country from the foeman's wrath.

When the Spaniard threatened our shores and the great conflict seemed inevitable, the Queen sought for a man to organise her navy, and found such a one in John Hawkins, who was acknowledged to be the best man of his age for the work. He was a sturdy, capable stubborn Englishman, having all the best characteristics of our race, who devoted himself steadily to the task and worked wonders, amidst many discouragements, rectifying abuses, abolishing the dishonest tricks of unscrupulous persons, and turning out strong suitable ships in splendid condition, well equipped with guns and other requisites for the defence of the nation. When the trial of strength came England had 34 ships from 1100 to 30 tons, carrying 857 guns

and 6279 men. Cities and towns contributed to the strength of the navy. London equipped 30 ships, and Southampton, Poole, Dartmouth, Plymouth, Barnstaple, Bristol and other places, sent brigs and barques. There were gathered to meet the assault of Spain, 197 ships with an aggregate tonnage of 29,744 tons, manned by 15,785 gallant seamen. Against this force were massed 130 ships, but they had twice as much tonnage, with 3165 guns, 19,295 soldiers, 8252 sailors, 2088 galley slaves, besides 2000 illustrious volunteers who were bent on crushing England, while 17,000 soldiers under the Duke of Palma were waiting to join the Armada at Calais.

Such was the state of the apparently unequal contest. How the English fought, how clever their seamanship and strategy, how they manœuvred and sank the unwieldy galleys one by one, it is beyond the scope of this history to narrate. Sir Francis Drake's account of what happened sums up the matter in plain and sailor-like fashion :

"Beaten and shuffled together from the Lizard to Calais, driven with squibs from their anchors, and chased out of sight of England about Scotland and Ireland, their invincible and dreadful navy, with all its great and terrible ostentation, did not in all their sailing about England, so much as sink or take one ship, bark, pinnace or cock-boat of ours, or even burn so much as one sheepcote on this land."

The events which called forth the energies of the navy also aroused the army to a sense of the danger to which England was exposed. It had been the rule from the thirteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century, whenever invasion threatened, to empower special "Commissioners of Array" to muster and train all, or a portion, of the men of each county capable of bearing arms, and to hold them in readiness to defend the kingdom. The sheriff had command of the shire forces. In the reign of Philip and Mary Lords-Lieutenants for each county had been appointed, who became the chief military officers of the Crown in every county. He appointed the officers and assessed the number of men to be supplied from each hundred or parish. The ancient obligation to keep sufficient arms according to each man's estate was enforced. Harrison tells us that in the time of Queen Mary we were very short of armour and artillery, and that this deficiency was noted with satisfaction by one of the greatest peers of Spain who espied our nakedness in this respect and who observed that "it would be an easy matter to conquer England, because it wanted armour."

When, however, Queen Elizabeth came to the throne this want was remedied and the country was well supplied with military equipment. The use of the long bow, which had earned the undying reputation of the English archers on many a bloody field, was passing away and became utterly decayed;

but the men became equally skilful in shooting with the caliver and in handling a pike and other weapons. Every town and village had its armoury, containing corslets, rivets, shirts of mail, jacks quilted and covered with leather, fustian or canvas. Even the poorest village had arms and armour for three or four soldiers, and Harrison concludes that England had never a better store of munitions and armour than she had in the years before the Spaniard came. The whole realm was an armoury and her furniture infinite. Beside the weapons kept in the Queen's armouries, some of the nobles had hundreds of corslets, besides calivers, hand-guns, bows, arrows, pikes, bills, pollaxes, flasks, touch-boxes, targets, etc., the very sight of which frightened the worthy wearer of the black gown. He gives the names of the greatest ordnance, the Robinet, Falconet, Falcon, Minion, Sacre, Demie Culverin, Culverin, Demie Canon, Canon, E. Canon, Basiliske, with their weight and the size of their mouths, and though he asks what hath the long black gown to do with glistening armour? or what acquaintance can there be between Mars and the Muses? he seems to have possessed a considerable knowledge of military affairs.

England was not unprepared when the Invincible Armada came. For eight years she had been putting her house in order, though hampered by the Queen's penuriousness. The coasts and creeks, which would have afforded a favourable place for an enemy's

landing, were fortified with forts and towers. The militia were put into training. Beacons were prepared on every towering height to warn the people to repair to their appointed meeting places, as Macaulay sings in his stirring ballad, and when they were fired the men would flock to their rendezvous, pike-men with their weapons twenty feet long wearing corslets, bill-men with shorter hook-shaped blades with murderous looking points, archers, horsemen wearing corslet and marion or helmet and tassets or thigh-guards. Some carried a harquebus or petronel; others were armed with culverin, or a larger petronel, or muschete. All were willing and determined to resist the foe, though many lacked training. In these modern days it is considered a marvellous feat to make a man a soldier in three months. Six days a year were then considered ample, and many had only received a training of one day. However, in the time of her emergency England was able to muster 86,016 foot and 13,831 cavalry, though only about half of the infantry could handle well their cumbersome primitive guns. They were never destined to try their strength against the soldiers of Spain, and that, perhaps, was fortunate for England, if Mouldy and Wart and Feeble were true types of the stuff of the British Army. Even brave and able soldiers like John Norris feared what might be the result if a single Spanish regiment succeeded in landing. The wooden walls of England kept the foreigners at bay

and effectually prevented a hostile landing on our shores—those walls that were manned by brave patriots and dauntless heroes, who in the hour of national or personal danger took as their motto the saying of old John Hawkins, "Fear nothing; God will deliver us."

Nothing reveals more clearly the gallant heart of England in this crisis of her history than the popular ballads that were composed and sung by the people, when the Armada threatened our country, at the fairs and market gatherings, ales and harvestings. England's very soul was stirred and the land was full of song:

"This isle was full of noises
Sounds and sweet airs that gave delight and hurt not."

One of the most spirited of these was by Thomas Deloney, a famous ballad-maker of the time, and is described—"A joyful new ballad, declaring the happie obtaining of the great Galleazzo, where in Don Pietro de Valdez was the chiefe, through the mightie power and providence of God, being a speciall token of his gracious and fatherly goodness towards us to the great encouragement of all those that willingly fight in the defence of his gospel and our good Queene of England."

(*To the Tune of Mounsenes Almaigne.*)

"O noble England
Fall downe upon thy knee;
And praise thy God with thankfull hart
Which still maintaineth thee.

The foraine forces,
That seekes thy utter spoile;
Shall then through His especial grace
Be brought to shameful foile.

With mightie power
They came unto our coast;
To overrunne our countrie quite,
They make their brags and boast.

In strength of men
They set their only stay;
But we upon the Lord our God
Will put our trust alway."

The ballad then goes on to describe the wonderful fleet, the soldiers, the stores of provisions and how the Pope has sent "many blessed graines, to sanctify their bad pretense bestowed both cost and paines." But "the little land" was not dismayed, for—

"In happie houre,
Our foes we did discry;
And under saile with gallant winde
As they came passing by.

Which suddaine tidings
To Plymouth being brought,
Full soon our Lord High Admirall
For to pursue them sought.

And to his traine
Courageously he saide:
Now for the Lord and our good Queene
To fight be not afraide.

Regard our cause
And play your partes like men;
The Lord no doubt will prosper us
In all our actions then."

Here is a grand description of a Spanish galleon :

" This great Galleazzo,
Which was so hughe and hye,
That like a bulwarke on the sea,
Did seeme to each man's eye.

There was it taken
Unto our great reliefe ;
And divers nobles in which traine
Don Pietro was the chiefe.

Strong was she stuft
With cannons great and small ;
And other instruments of warre
Which we obtainéd all.

A certaine signe
Of good success we trust ;
That God will overthrow the rest
As he hath done the first."

Then the verses describe the pursuit of the Spaniards until they " neere Callice came." There the false Spaniards on board one of the ships hung out a flag of truce, which when the sailors saw, they sent some " little barkes " to board her ; but " the false Spaniards broke their word, and with charged cannons " received them rather warmly ; so, " like lions fierce," the Englishmen fought their faithless foes, and killed the men and sunk their ark in Callice sand. The name of the Spanish captain is given, Don Hugo de Moncaldo, " through whose braines y^e^ pouders force a Bullet strong did beat."

The " mightie vessell " was three score yards in length ; what would the poet have said if he could

have seen our modern ships-of-war ? He describes her equipment, and the intentions of the savage foes. Evidently these verses were written during the fights with the Armada, while the ships were in the Channel, for the ballad concludes with a spirited verse praying " his deare bretheren which beareth armes this day for safegarde of your native soile," to regard their duties and fight valiantly for their God, their queen and country.

Many a simple English heart was doubtless stirred by Deloney's strains to fight for his hearth and home, and many lonely ones comforted when they heard the news that their gallant sons had not yet been defeated.

The next ballad is a spirited description of " the Queenes visiting of the campe at Tilsburie with her entertainment there." We can form from these verses a very accurate picture of the courtly state which Queen Elizabeth loved so dearly, the arrangement of the troops with their banners, some of them torn and rent with the bullets of Flanders ; and we can realise the enthusiasm which the presence of the Queen and her well-chosen words aroused in the hearts of her soldiers, and the tact and judgment which she displayed during that anxious time. Here is a description of her royal progress :

" And on the eighth of August she
From fair St. James' tooke her way,
With many Lords of high degree
In princely robes and rich aray.

And to bardge upon the water
Being King Henryes royall daughter
She did goe with trumpets sounding,
And with dubbing drums apace,
Along the Thames that famous river
For to view the campe a space."

On arriving at the camp the soldiers kneel to receive their Sovereign, but the Queen says, "Lord blesse you all, my friends, but doe not kneele so much to me. Her royall heart leaped at the sight of her noble hosts, and tossing up her plume of feathers, cheerefully her body bending, she waved her royall hand." She abode at the house of a "Maister Riches" for the night; and then on the morrow "riding on a princely paulfrey with her lordes and ladies all she came to the campe with a guarde of yeomen, the sergeant-trumpet with his mace, nine trumpeters in coats of scarlet colour trim, the King of Heralds bearing the Arms of England, wrought with rich embroidered gold on the finest velvet blue and crimson; and two sergeants, in velvet coats, bearing maces of beaten gold." Thus proceeded the virgin Queen "atired like an angell bright," with no lack of attendance, besides the goodly company already described.

"And then bespake our noble Queen,
My loving friends and countriemen,
I hope this day the worst is seene
That in our wars we shall sustaine.
But if our enemies do assaile you,
Never let your stomackes faile you,

For in the midst of all your troupe,
We ourselves will be in place,
To be your joy, your guide and comfort
Even before our enemies face."

With a brief account of Her Majesty's return the ballad closes. It is signed "T.D.," and imprinted by John Wolfe, for Edwarde White, 1588.

These extracts from the ballads of Thomas Deloney will give the reader some idea of their style and contents, who has not been able to study the original copies preserved with great care in the British Museum. But Deloney was not the only popular songster of the period. Here is a verse from an unknown writer, entitled "Queen Elizabeth's Champion; or Great Britain's Glory," which lacks neither spirit nor animation:

"Come sound up your trumpets and beat up your drums,
And let's go to sea with a valiant cheer,
In search of a mightie vast navy of ships,
The like has not been for these fifty long year.
Raderer two, tandaro te,
Raderer tandorer, ran do te.

The Queen she provided a navy of ships,
With sweet flying streamers so glorious to see;
Rich top and topgallant, captains and lieutenants,
Some forty, some fifty brass pieces and three.
Raderer two, tandaro te,
Raderer, tandorer ran do te."

Such were some of the verses of the ballad-writers who, by the cheerful strains and spirited words, gave courage to the sailors' hearts, and nerved the

warrior's arm for victory. When anxiety was stamped on every brow, they inspired hope and resolution, and the songs of the people play no inconsiderable part in national history. And when the victory was won, and the Spanish ships were being wrecked on the Scottish coasts, or on the rocky shores of Ireland, the people sang their songs as they had never done before, and all England rang with one universal shout of exultation.

The Queen Elizabeth was the popular idol; to her exertions they attributed the victory; and many a courtly ode and tribute of praise, many a homely ballad were chanted in her honour. The most elaborate of these compositions is a curious epigram, by Theodore Beza, written in several languages, in Latin, English, Dutch, French, Spanish, Hebrew and Greek. Here is the English stanza of this strange composition, preserved in the British Museum. It is entitled—

"Ad Serenissimam Elizabetham Reginam.

The Spanish Fleete did flote in narrow seas,
And bend her ships against the English shore,
With so great rage as nothing could appease
And with such strength as never seene before.
And all to joyne the kingdom of that land
Unto the kingdoms that he had in hand.
Now if you aske what set this king on fire,
To practise warre when he of peace did treat,
It was his Pride and never quencht desire,
To spoile that Islands wealthe by Peace made great.
His Pride which farre above the heavens did swell,
And his desire as unsufficed as hell.

But well have winds his proud blasts overblowen,
And swelling waves alaid his swelling heart,
Well hath the Sea with greedie gulfs unknown,
Devoured the devourer to his smart:
And made his ships a praie unto the sand
That meant to praie upon another's land.
And now O Queen above all others blest,
For whom both windes and waves are prest to fight,
So rule your own, so succour friends opprest,
(As farre from pride as ready to do right),
That England you, you England, long enjoy
No lesse your friends' delight, than foes annoy."

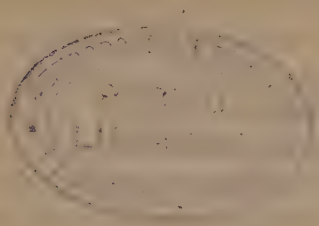
From a curious book, entitled *A Fig for the Spaniards or Spanish Spirits, wherein are livelie portrayed the damnable deeds, miserable murders and monstrous massacres of the cursed Spaniards*, published in 1591, I extract a fair sample of the panegyrics to which the Virgin Queen's ears must have become familiar.

"Hæc est virgo potens, hæc est Regina fidelis
Hæc est Diva latens mulibribus alma figuris
Qua tot lustra gerens apud Anglos nobile sceptrum
Regibus est radamata bonis, populoque Deoque."

Of the later Armada poetry I do not propose to treat. Of Robert Southey's sweetly flowing lines; of Macaulay's grand unfinished poem which reflects so faithfully the spirit of the Armada days, and lights again the beacons on the hills; of Schiller's stirring verses which conclude with—

"God the Almighty blew,
And the Armada went to every wind—"

of these we cannot now speak. But a study of the current ballad literature of the day enables us to understand more perfectly the popular feeling which existed in the minds of Englishmen when "the ocean castles and floating hosts" of Spain threatened our shores, to realise the indomitable courage with which our brave forefathers faced their formidable foe, and won a victory unparalleled in the annals of the history of the world.



XIII

AGRICULTURE AND TRADE

" I thank my God and ever shall
It was the sheep that paid for all "—

was the saying of the clothiers and woolmen of England, and this was certainly true of the Tudor landowners and farmers of England until the time of Shakespeare. Every one was busy with these useful fleeces which brought much wealth into England and lined the pockets of the merchants and agriculturists. All the land was given up to grazing, and the farmers cared not for ploughing and sowing when they found that keeping sheep was more profitable. English wool commanded a high price in Continental markets, and English clothiers such as the famous " Jack of Newbury " waxed fat and prosperous. But in the special period we are studying rural affairs were altered. English wool declined in price as it did in quality. Wheat rose in value from six shillings a quarter in Henry VIII's time to thirty-eight shillings in that of the later years of Queen Elizabeth.

An extensive system of enclosure set in. Acts of Parliament were passed ordering that pasture should

be turned into tillage and that no arable land should be laid down to grass. Sheep-farming required little labour ; hence there had been much distress among the agricultural labourers, who had flocked to the towns, and their cottages had been pulled down. They were now called back to the country to till the land ; cottages had to be built for them, and landlords and farmers, copyholders and labourers shared in the increased prosperity of the country-side.

Harrison tells us that the soil of England is very fruitful, and brings forth many commodities of which other countries have need, but that it is fitter for grazing than tilling. In his day three-fourths of the country was pasture and one-fourth arable, but the soil had been very much improved in recent times by the " painful " (painstaking) care and skill of the farmers, and the pasture was mostly fine and rich, so much so that the cattle were speedily fatted, or yielded a great abundance of milk and cream, which produced the yellowest butter and the finest cheese. Wales had the best pasture land, and the county of Cardigan was as fertile as Italy, which, in the learned author's time, was deemed the Paradise of the World, but on account of the wickedness of the inhabitants he deemed it to be the " very sink and drain of Hell."[1] Hop-growing had recently been

[1] Harrison never ceased to goad at Italy and on the shameless conduct of her people, strongly objecting to our young men going there and learning their evil ways.

started with excellent results, and few farmers had no hop-gardens, the crops of which were far better than those brought to us from Flanders. The Flemings had used much corruption and daily forgery in this industry, but the tables had been turned, and our farmers could not only supply the country's requirements, but export their hops to Flanders. Harrison regretted that we had no vineyards and did not make wine; though some had lately tried wine-growing, but the experiment had not succeeded. He notes that in former times there were vineyards, and refers to the old wine-tithes, abbey vineyards, of that at Smithfield, quoting as his authority John Stow, the great London antiquary. The Isle of Ely was called the Isle of Vines, and other evidence is brought forward to show that it would be quite possible to grow grapes in England and to make our own wine.

And here I may recall the description of an Elizabethan farmer, as he is depicted by a contemporary writer, John Stephens, in his work entitled *Essays and Characters*, published in 1615. It is at once graphic and amusing:

"A farmer is a concealed commodity. His worth or value is not fully known till he be half rotten: and then he is worth nothing. He hath religion enough to say, God bless his Majesty; God send peace, and fair weather: so that one may glean harvest out of him to be his time of happiness: but the tithe-sheaf goes against his conscience; for

he had rather spend the value upon his reapers and ploughman than bestow anything to the maintenance of a parson. He is sufficiently book-read, nay, a profound doctor, if he can search into the diseases of cattle : and to foretell rain by tokens makes him a miraculous astronomer. To speak good English is more than he much regards ; and for him not to contemn all arts and languages, were to condemn his own education. The pride of his housekeeping is a mess of cream, a pig, or a green goose : and if his servants can uncontrolled find the highway to the cupboard, he wins the name of a bountiful yeoman. Doubtless he would murmur against the Tribune's law, by which none might occupy more than five hundred acres, for he murmurs against himself, because he cannot purchase more. To purchase arms (if he emulates gentry) sets upon him like an ague : it breaks his sleep, takes away his stomach, and he can never be quiet till the herald hath given him the harrows, the cuckoo, or some ridiculous emblem for his armoury. The bringing up and marriage of his eldest son, is an ambition which afflicts him so soon as the boy is born, and the hope to see his son superior, or placed above him, drives him to dote upon the boy in his cradle. To peruse the statutes, and prefer them before the Bible makes him purchase the credit of a shrewd fellow ; and then he brings all adversaries to composition ; and if at length he can discover himself in large legacies beyond expectation, he hath his desire. Meantime, he makes the prevention of a dearth his title to be thought a good commonwealth's man. And therefore he preserves a chandler's treasure of bacon, links and puddings in the chimney

corner. He is quickly and contentedly put into the fashion, if his clothes be made against Whitsuntide, or Christmas Day : and then outwardly he contemns appearance. He cannot therefore choose but hate a Spaniard likewise, and (he thinks) that hatred only makes him a loyal subject : for benevolence and subsidies be more unseasonable to him, than his quarter's rent. Briefly, being a good housekeeper, he is an honest man : and so, he thinks of no rising higher, but rising early in the morning ; and being up, he hath no end of motion, but wanders in his woods and pastures so continually, that when he sleeps, or sits, he wanders also. After this, he turns into his element, by being too venturous hot, and cold : then he is fit for nothing but a chequered grave : howsoever some may think him convenient to make an everlasting bridge ; because his best foundation has been (perhaps) upon wool-packs."

Trade was carried on in fairs and markets. We had in England such gigantic fairs as Stourbridge, near Cambridge, and Bartholomew Fair at Smithfield ; and every town and some villages had fairs which were bestowed upon them by royal grants. Fairs are of ecclesiastical origin, as their name denotes. Fair is the Latin *feria* or holy day, and it would be interesting to show how in the East the great gatherings for religious observances became the centres of organised trading ; such as the great fair held in the eleventh century on Mount Calvary, on September 15th every year, where the productions of Europe were exchanged for those of the

East. The German name *messen*, derived from the Mass or feast, seems also to denote the ecclesiastical origin of fairs.

They were usually held on the Festival of the Patron Saint of the Church in each parish, whither flocked friends and neighbours from the surrounding villages, and quite small villages used to have their fairs. Profiting by such assemblies, chapmen used to set up their booths and stalls and sell their produce, and minstrels and mountebanks added their amusements, and thus a fair arose. Fairs were held by prescription or by Royal grant; that is to say, the right of holding one became a privilege. If it had been held from time immemorial, it was held by right of prescription; if not, it owed its origin to some Royal grant, which was bestowed on some individual, corporation, church, or monastery, and the right of collecting tolls, stallage, etc., was conferred on the beneficiary.

Archdeacon Cunningham, in his *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, writes: "By far the greater part of the commerce of this country was carried on at such fairs, and Stourbridge Fair was one of the most important in the whole kingdom, rivalling, it was said, the great fair of Nijni Novgorod, as a gathering of world-wide fame."

Fuller, in the seventeenth century, states that there was a tradition that this fair originated with some Westmorland cloth dealers, who were here overtaken by a storm on their way to Norwich, and

found so ready a market for their goods, which they spread out to dry on the grass of the common, that they went no further, but returned hither the next year and again. This tradition does not seem improbable, as Kendal has, from time immemorial, been renowned for its cloth—the famous " Kendal green " worn, as old ballads record, by the English archers ; and Norwich was throughout the Middle Ages the great commercial centre of the cloth trade.

King John, however, was the real originator, as, in 1211, he granted to the lepers of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen at Stourbridge, by Cambridge, a fair to be held in the Close of the Hospital on the Vigil and Feast of Holy Cross. There were sad disputings between the University and the Corporation of Cambridge about this fair and these lasted six centuries. However, I will not trouble you with an account of them.[1]

A new charter was sought by the Mayor in 1553, when it was proposed to pay King Edward VI 1000 marks for the privilege, but delays occurred, and it was not obtained until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in the year 1589, who granted two charters, one to the town and the other to the University. Queen Elizabeth was an ardent admirer and supporter of learning, and greatly loved both Universities, Oxford and Cambridge ; and when the town complained of the usurpations of the University,

[1] Cf. my lecture on " Stourbridge Fair," *British Archæological Association Journal*, September, 1913.

she replied that " she would not take away any privileges of the University but would rather add to them."

In this charter of Queen Elizabeth it is stated that Stourbridge, from the advantages of the place, its contiguity to the University, and the fitness of the season, far surpassed the greatest and most celebrated fairs of all England, whence great benefits had resulted to the merchants of the whole kingdom, who resorted thereto, and there quickly sold their wares and merchandises to purchasers coming from all parts of the realm. A list of the goods sold would take up much time to record. We have mention of the tolls and customs payable for merchandise in the time of Philip and Mary, which open our eyes to the vast variety of goods brought here for sale. What is styled " beyond sea classhold " seems to indicate goods brought from abroad, which found their way to Stourbridge by the waterways along the Ouse, and Cam, and Stour. In mediæval times monks from monasteries near and far came to purchase supplies for their houses. Squires and noblemen bought goods for their manor houses. In the Household Book of Lord North in the time of Queen Elizabeth I find a long list of goods purchased by him, including salt fish, white salt, bay salt (showing the large amounts of salt meats consumed in great houses in Tudor times), kettles, pails, feather bedtick, raisins, currants, prunes, gunpowder, dog-couples, etc.

The household and privy-purse accounts of the

Lestranges, of Hunstanton, also show that the squire spent eight shillings "for my cost in ryding to Styrbryche feyer to buy stuffe for ye house and home again."

Amongst the crowd of eager buyers and sellers were Venetian and Genoese merchants with their rich stuffs, their silks and velvets, the Flemish weavers with their linens, the Spaniard with his stock of iron, the Norwegian with his tar and pitch, the Gascon with his wines, the Hanse merchants with their furs and amber, while squires, and earls, and college bailiffs eagerly flitted about making purchases. There were such valuable commodities as embroidery upon velvet and cloth of gold, cloths of silk wrought with gold, and silver of Cyprus and gold of Lucca, Spanish leather, Spanish iron, Eastern boards (wainscots) and a mysterious article, a hundred half-wax fish (probably dried fish).

The fair was the prototype of "Vanity Fair" in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, who thus describes the bustling scene and vividly allegorises it:

"At this Fair are all such merchandize sold as Houses, Lands, Trades, Places, Honours, Preferments, Countries, Kingdoms, Suits, Pleasures and Delights of all sorts, etc. And moreover at this Fair there is at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves and rogues, and that of every kind.

"And, as in other fairs of less moment, there are the several rows and streets under their proper

names, where such and such wares are vended, so here likewise you have the proper places, rows and streets where the wares of this fair are soonest to be found. Here is Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of vanities are to be sold."

There is no contemporary account of the proceedings which perhaps our poet witnessed, as he went to Cambridge with his company of actors. Once only does he mention fairs in his plays, though he must often have been present at the revel.

In *All's Well* occurs the line :

" I will buy me a son-in-law at a fair, and toll him."[1]

Although there is no description of Stourbridge in the poet's time, the proceedings were regulated by time-honoured custom, and therefore differed little from the scenes recorded a little later.

The fair was proclaimed on September 7th with great solemnity by the Vice-Chancellor of the University and the Mayor of the town, accompanied by the Members of Parliament, Aldermen, Recorder, soldiers and officers on horseback, with music playing before them, the crier in scarlet on horseback, forming a grand procession, followed by a great number of boys of the town on horseback, who as soon as the ceremony of proclaiming was over rode races, and on returning to Cambridge each boy had a cake and some ale at the Town Hall.

[1] Act V, scene 3.

The proclamation began with the familiar "O yes, O yes, O yes," a corruption of the old Norman French "Oyez," "hear ye," ordered silence, bade people keep the peace, and make no affrays or outcries, nor wear weapons upon pain of imprisonment and loss of those weapons, ordered all vagrant and unruly persons to withdraw, and bade the bakers, brewers, vintners, etc., to sell good and wholesome victuals, and ending up with God save the King.

Previous to the opening, if the husbandmen who rent the land do not clear their corn before August 24th, the fair people may trample it down in order to build their booths; but if the fair folk have not removed their stalls before Michaelmas Day at noon, the ploughmen may come in with their horses, ploughs and carts and destroy whatever they may find.

The shops or booths were built in rows like streets, having each their name, as Garlick Row, Booksellers' Row, Cook Row, etc., and every commodity had its proper place, as the Cheese Fair, Hop Fair, Wool Fair. All sorts of traders were there, wholesale or retail, goldsmiths, toymen, brasiers, turners, milliners, haberdashers, hatters, mercers, drapers, pewterers, china warehouses; in fact, every trade in London was represented. There were also taverns, coffee-houses, eating-houses, where you could have made a hearty meal on roast goose, boiled pork, and other delicacies.

Crossing the main road at the south end of Garlick

Row is a great square, formed of the largest booths, called the Duddery (derived from the old word Dudde, signifying cloth—Scotch folk still call clothes *duds*), where the wholesale clothiers or woollen manufacturers had their booths. In the centre was a may-pole capped by a vane, and also a pulpit whence the minister of Barnwell preached on the two Sundays during the fair. In this Duddery alone £100,000 worth of woollen manufactures was sold in less than a week, besides the prodigious trade carried on by wholesale men from London and all parts of England, who transacted their business wholly in their pocket-books, and meeting their chapmen from all parts made up their accounts, received money chiefly in bills and took orders. These exceeded by far the sales of goods brought actually to the fair. Clothiers from Yorkshire and Lancashire flocked there, bringing 1000 horse-pack of goods. A part of a street of booths was taken up with upholsterers' ware. The West of England goods were well represented and an enormous amount of wool and hops was sold, the price of hops throughout England being settled according to the charge of Stourbridge Fair. It was like a well-fortified city, without disorder or confusion. The gentry came in from the surrounding country towards the end of the fair, bought their stuff and enjoyed the puppet shows, drolls, rope-dancers and such like. The last day was spent in horse-racing and foot races. In most fairs there was a local

court of justice called Pied-Powder Court, the name probably being derived from the "dusty feet" of the fair folk who attended it. The whole circuit of the fair ground was three miles, and within this space all the business was transacted and the booths set up. On some occasions when the plague was raging, the authorities forbade the holding of the fair on account of the fear of infection.

Such in brief is the story of Stourbridge Fair, very different from some of the smaller ones which, as Harrison says, were only "for drink, pies and pedlary," and which he thought ought to be stopped, as they corrupted the youths. He gives a full list of all the fairs in England and the days on which they were held.

The records of Bartholomew Fair are voluminous. In Shakespeare's time the proceedings were watched by our foreign guest Hentzner, who thus described what he saw:

"It is worthy of observation that every year, upon St. Bartholomew's Day, when the fair is held, it is usual for the mayor, attended by twelve principal aldermen, to walk in a neighbouring field, dressed in his scarlet gown, and about his neck a golden chain, to which is hung a golden Fleece, and, besides, that particular ornament which distinguishes the most noble order of the Garter. When the mayor goes out of the precincts of the city a sceptre and sword and a cap are borne before him, and he is followed by the principal aldermen in scarlet gowns with gold chains, himself and they

on horseback. Upon their arrival at a certain place appointed for that purpose, where a tent is pitched, the mob trying to wrestle before them, two at a time ; the conquerors receive rewards from the magistrates. After this is over a parcel of live rabbits are turned loose among the crowd, which are pursued by a number of boys who endeavour to catch them, with all the noise they can make. While we were at the show, one of our company, Tobias Salander, Doctor of Physic, had his pocket picked of his purse with nine crowns which, without doubt, was so cleverly taken from him by an Englishman, who always kept very close to him, that the Doctor did not perceive it."

Hentzner does not tell us that this gathering was the chief Cloth Fair of England, and in that respect had no rival. The Merchant Taylors' Company have still their silver yard-measure with which they were authorised to try the measures of the clothiers and drapers. That bit of old London called Cloth Fair, erected by Lord Rich after the Priory had been dissolved, marks the place where the booths of the clothiers stood in fair-time. Dated 1604, there is still extant the order of the proceedings of the Lord Mayor, who was met by the Aldermen and Sheriffs at the Guildhall Chapel after dinner at two o'clock, attired in their violet gowns lined, with their horses. The company rode to Newgate and thence to Smithfield, where a long proclamation was read, which enjoined the keeping of the peace and the selling of goods by proper weights and measures.

Before 1614 Smithfield was often a sea of mud and filth during fair-time. In that year it was paved and houses had been built which encroached upon the ground originally occupied by the traders. At the same time Ben Jonson produced his comedy, *Bartholomew Fair*, painting a wonderful picture of the assembly with its follies and vices. We make the acquaintance of Adam Overdo, judge of the court of Piepowder, who wanders about the fair disguised so that he may discover abuses; Puppy, the wrestler, asleep before the booth of fat Ursula, the pigwoman; a north-country clothier somewhat overcome by the "too meaghty eale," sole representative of the merchants of Leeds and Bradford, who brought their wares and did their business in Cloth Fair. We see Master Daniel Knockem Jordan, the horse courser, captain of roarers, bully in sword, boot and feather, a knight of the knife who cuts purses and steals penny dogs; ballad-singers, pigwomen, costard or apple mongers, bullies, the Piepowder Court with its justice and clerks and marshals; stocks and whipping-post for transgressors, and a pond for ducking Ursula, the pigwoman. There was Kindheart, the tooth-drawer, and an ape that leaped over a chair for a King of England, but refused to perform for the Pope or the King of Spain, hobby-horses, drums and rattles; and roast pig seems to have been the chief delicacy of which Ursula was the principal purveyor. The ballad-singers shout:

" Buy my ballads ! new ballads ! Hey !
Now the Fair's a filling !
O for a time to startle :
The birds o' the booths here billing
Yearly with old Saint Bartle ! "

Then there was the burlesque puppet play, *The Ancient Modern History of Hero and Leander, otherwise called the Touchstone of True Love, with as true a Trial of Friendship between Damon and Pythias, two faithful friends of the Bankside,* and the Puritan Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, who hove from Banbury, and is described as a " hypocritical vermin." He rages against stage-plays, but is " converted " by a puppet. The tricks of the cut-purses are set forth and their success proven. But these and other vagaries of the Pleasure Fair, so fully described by the poet in his play, reflect only the social life of the period, and do not concern the economic values of the Fair. There were others in London : May Fair, held by a grant of the Abbot of Westminster in Brook Field, on the site of Curzon Street, began on May Day and lasted with much revelry for fourteen days. It was presented as a nuisance and stopped for a time in 1708, and finally abolished in the reign of George II. Southwark Fair, or Lady Fair, once depicted by Hogarth, was suppressed at the end of the eighteenth century, and St. James's Fair and one on Tower Hill were other marts in the City for the sale of various commodities.

Weekly markets were held in most towns for the

convenience of buyers, to which agricultural produce was brought for sale. There seem to have been many tricks in trade. The inspection of the goods was imperfectly carried out, and if a country baker brought to the market good bread, fault was found with it by the townsfolk and he was obliged to return home with his goods unsold. Moreover, there was much drunkenness at these gatherings caused by "heady ale and beer, called by the people hussecap, mad dog, angels' food and dragons' milk." Malt bugs hugged at ale-pots like pigs at their dame's teats, till they were as red as cocks and little wiser than their combs.

Bodgers and loaders and common carriers bought up all the corn and then raised the price so that the poor man could not purchase his weekly stock. Much corn was exported to hostile nations and Papists to the detriment of the home consumer. The bodgers were terrible folk, and were guilty of all manner of deceit. They kept the corn to enhance the price even till it was musty, and then the poor were forced to buy it, and it gave them the plague. Purveyors[1] also bought all kinds of farm-produce, butter, cheese, pigs, capons, hens, hogs and bacon, and then permitted their wives to sell these goods elsewhere, raising the prices. There were too many dealers. There were no standard weights and

[1] Purveyors were those who bought for the sovereign's use, exercising the prerogative of purveyance. They often abused their authority, and their powers of pre-emption were considered a great hardship.

measures, and these wretched dealers bought by one measure, the larger one, and sold by a smaller one. These and other tricks were resorted to by these infamous creatures who cheated the poor and wronged the nation. However, in spite of abuses the markets were useful institutions. They supplied the neighbourhood with all that the people required, and there was scarcely a town throughout the country which had not its weekly market and once or twice a year its fair.

Trade increased enormously during our period. During the reigns of the Queen's immediate predecessors it was at a low ebb and there was much distress in the land. Vagrants and impoverished people were plentiful and the Government found it necessary to institute some first attempts at Poor Law enactments. The coinage had been shamelessly debased and Elizabeth determined early in her reign to reform the currency, and this contributed greatly to the revival of trade. Her policy was based upon what we usually call "Protection," which is effective in fostering new industries whatever the advocates of a Free Trade policy may urge against it. English merchants were not obliged to pay customs. English fishermen brought their cargoes of fish into port free of charge, whereas foreigners were heavily mulcted. English folk were obliged to fast and eat fish, not so much as a religious duty, but as an encouragement to the fishing industry. In order to promote the industry of cap-

making everyone below a certain rank had to wear a cap, or submit to be fined. New charters were granted to the City Companies of London, and some of their duties were to supervise the quality of the goods provided by the members thereof, to regulate the trade and advance the interests of the members. As I have already noticed many industrious foreigners, driven out of France and Flanders, by religious persecution, flocked to our shores and brought with them the secrets of their industries, especially of cloth-making, and the manufacture of silk, paper, thread, " bags, sages, arras, mockades," lace, parchment, needles, gallipots, etc. The old English clothiers continued to prosper and maintain their supremacy in their trade.

Our ships sailed to many distant ports and brought home the treasures of India, Persia, Turkey, Russia, Sweden and America. From the port of Antwerp came jewels and precious stones, silver, bullion, quicksilver, silks, cloth of gold and silver, gold and silver thread, camblets, grograms, spices, drugs, sugar, cotton, cummin galls, linen fine and coarse, serges, demi-ostades, tapestry, madder, hops in great quantity, glass, salt fish, metallic and other merceries of all sorts to a great value, arms of all kinds, ammunition for war, and household furniture. To Antwerp we sent vast quantities of fine and coarse draperies, fringes and other things of that kind, the finest wool, excellent saffron in small

quantities, a great amount of lead and tin, sheep and rabbit skins without number, and various other kinds of fine peltry and leather, beer, cheese, and other sorts of provisions ; and also malmsey wines which we imported from Candia.[1]

Great Merchant Trading Companies carried on the trade of England with foreign countries and enjoyed monopolies. The Merchant Adventurers were the pioneers of English commercial enterprise, and during our period there were formed the Russia Company, the Company of New Trades, the Company of Tripoli Merchants, the Eastland Company, which subsequently became the East India Company. By a sort of " peaceful penetration " the Germans, after their usual fashion, had acquired a very large amount of our English trade by the means of the Hanseatic League, which had its abode in the steelyard of the Hanse merchants in London. It was very despotic in the exercise of its rights, and was wisely suppressed in 1552, thus leaving scope for English enterprise.

The growth of English industry, the development of our native resources, of metals and mining, of new industries, the exploits of individuals, the whole story of monopolies would require much space for their complete elucidation, and we must pass on to other features of Shakespearean England.

[1] L. Guicciardini.

XIV

LITERATURE

TO open the casket in which Elizabethan gems of literature are stored is at once a joy and a privilege. To study the portraits of the masters of those days, the giants and pigmies, the scholars and divines, the poets and poetasters, the roystering Bohemian and the cultured student, to open their works and revel in their masterpieces, admits one to a New World as rich as El Dorado and as pleasing to the mind and senses. English letters of Shakespeare's age had little ground to build upon. There had been a dearth of poets. The preceding years were not ideal for literary composition. The disturbances wrought by the Reformation and the destruction of the monasteries, which had been regarded as homes of learned leisure, the religious persecutions of Mary's reign and the uncertainty, had hindered the progress of the revival of letters which was felt in Italy and in a less degree in Germany and France as a result of the Renaissance. The old English poets Chaucer and Gower, who wrote his *Confessio Amantis*, had

been long dead. The buffooneries of Skelton, "Poet Laureate," were of little account. Henry Howard, Earl of Dorset, pronounced to be the first English classical poet on account of "justness of thought, correctness of style and purity of expression," the first polite writer of love-verses in our language, the translator of Virgil, the introducer of blank verse into the English tongue, had ended his life on Tower Hill at the early age of about thirty years (the exact date of his birth is not known) in 1546–7. Sir Thomas Wyatt was not a great poet and nearly shared the fate of Surrey. His poems were published by Tottel together with those of Surrey and of some "uncertain authors," in the first printed poetical English miscellany, containing probably poems of various excellence by Sir Francis Bryan, George Boleyn, Lord Rochford (brother of Anne Boleyn) and Lord Vaux, all professed rhymers and sonnet-writers. This publication shows that poetry in England was not dead, but awaited development. And then we have George Gascoigne, writer of prose and verse, *bene natus, bene vestitus et modice doctus* (like a Fellow of All Souls', Oxford), soldier, courtier, Member of Parliament, and possibly a bit of a roysterer, leading an adventurous life, and scribbling much that is not without merit. His blank verse is pronounced by a great modern critic to be worthy of a little praise; his prose spirited and vigorous, but his metres are limp and wooden, his style stiffened with the old clumsy alliteration

and his verse lacks fire. Thus he wrote in *The Steele Glas :*

> " Pray for the nources of our noble Realme,
> I mean the worthy Universities,
> (And Cantabridge shall have the dignities,
> Whereof I was unworthy member once),
> That they bring up their babes in decent wise :
> That Philosophy smel no secret smoke
> Which Magike makes in wicked mysteries,"
> etc., etc., etc.

It is all rather dull. In the Royal MSS. there is an illustration showing the soldier-author armed with sword and lance presenting one of his works to the Queen. A wreath is suspended over his head and a hand holds a scroll bearing the legend, *Tam Marti quam Mercurio.*

Sundry minor poets adorned this preliminary period before the burst of the song of the true Elizabethans. There was George Turberville. He was learned in languages, loved the classics, and was secretary to the Russian ambassador, Thomas Randolph. He translated Ovid's Epistles and Ecloques and some Italian " Tragical Tales," and delighted in writing " Elegant and Witty Epigrams " and Epitaphs which are usually conceits without point and with lame and impotent endings. Other minor poets of the period were Thomas Churchyard, who wrote *Challenge,* advocating the delights of the country, the *Mirror and Manners of Men,* abusing the conduct of the time ; Barnebe Googe, the translator of *The Popish Kingdom* of

Thomas Naogeorgus, or Kirchmaier; Heresbach's *Five Books of Husbandry*, and other books; Hunnis, Edwards, Roydon and others who translated Latin or Italian poems into English, or wrote quaint verse of no particular merit.

Amongst these minor lights shines the greater star, Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset, who wrote *Gorboduc* and the Complaint of Henry Duke of Buckingham and the Induction to the *Mirror of Magistrates*, a collection of narratives of the lives of various remarkable personages who had figured in our history, probably borrowed from a Latin treatise of Boccaccio, which had been translated many years before by Lydgate under the title of *The Fall of Princes*. There is nothing very remarkable about the work save these two contributions by Sackville, who was then a young man and had not yet been ennobled. These poems evince a strength of creative imagination which had been unknown in England since the days of Chaucer; and the Induction especially, which is a splendid gallery of allegoric paintings, tinged with dark and melancholy hues, entitles Sackville to the renown of having no small share in lighting the way to the greatest painter in our own or any other poetry—the author of *The Faerie Queene*.

Sackville's *Gorboduc* is one of the first attempts in England at writing tragic drama. It is the first English imitation of Seneca's Latin tragedy. It is written in blank verse, and may be considered as

an experiment of a somewhat doubtful kind. It treats of wars, tumults and rebellions. Drums and flutes sound. Armed men march upon the stage and discharge their guns. Brother kills brother—it is all very tragic and unreal, but it prepared the way for the real drama that was to follow, the plays of our poet and his contemporaries. Other early experiments in dramatic writing, of which much has doubtless perished, are *Ralph Roister Doister*, by Nicholas Udall, head-master of St. Paul's School and Eton, and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, by Bishop Still.

But the flow of the stream of literature rolled on, and gathered force as it progressed. If we concern ourselves with dates we may place the real literary revival as having started about the year 1579, and foremost among its leaders was John Lyly, whose *Euphues* appeared at that time. Sir Henry Blount, in a preface to an earlier work, said of this author, " Our nation are in his debt for a new English which he taught them. Euphues and his England began first that language ; all our ladies were then his scholars ; and that beauty in court which could not parley Euphuism, that is to say, who was unable to converse in that pure and reformed English, which he had formed his work to be the standard of, was so little regarded as she which now there speaks not French." *Euphues and his England* is the second part of the work ; the first being *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit.* A story runs

through the work with the plot of which we are not concerned; but it unfolds a scheme of education which owes much to Plutarch. There are letters in praise of the Queen and other notables of the day, and reflections upon the state of Elizabethan Society which are not altogether flattering. The language of Euphuism is pedantic, fantastic and extravagant; there is much far-fetched allusion, elaborate indirectness, alliteration and monotony of phrase; but there are also much wit, fancy and prettiness. Shakespeare alludes to this mode of speech in his Euphuist Don Adriano de Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*, who is described by the King as a "man of fire—new words, fashion's own knight—that hath a mint of phrases in his brain—one whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony." Holofernes says: "I abhor such fanatical fantasms, such insociable and point-devise companions; such rackers of orthography as to speak *dout*, fine, when he should say *doubt*; *det*, when he should pronounce *debt*, *d*, *e*, *b*, *t*, not *d*, *e*, *t*; he clepeth a calf, *cauf*; half, *hauf*; neighbour vocatur *nebour*, neigh, abbreviated *ne*: this is abhominable (which he would call *abominable*); it insinuateth me of insanie." Shakespeare is evidently laughing at the pedantic schoolmaster more than at the fantastic thought, and the pronunciation which he makes Holofernes criticise was probably his own and that of the educated folk of his time. But the chief influence of Lyly's work

was the creation of pleasure in the new resources of thought and language, of style and phrase and beauty in the expression of the English tongue.

In prose Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* achieved a remarkable success, reflecting as it does the noble qualities of the writer, his romantic chivalry, his tenderness and childlike simplicity of heart, his keen sense of the fullness of the life of his age, his learning, his adventurous spirit—all these are revealed in this beautiful pastoral medley. The *Arcadia* was written about 1580, and earlier came his poems, *Astrophel and Stella*. His *Apology for Poetry* soon followed, a work written in stately style sounding the same note of music in his sonorous phrases. His heroic death in Flanders on the field of battle closed at an early age his brilliant career.

The immortal work of Edmund Spenser, the *Faerie Queene*, soon burst on an astonished world like the sunshine of a glorious summer after a fitful spring. This was in 1590. Eleven years earlier he had won his place at the head of English poesy by his *Shepherd's Calendar*, "where love and loyalty and Puritanism justled oddly with the fancied shepherd life." Little inferior to him was his friend, Thomas Watson, author of *Hecatompathia*, a poet of no mean merit. Vain would it be to attempt to reproduce here the panegyrics that the *Faerie Queene* has called forth. It was "the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the

model of every poet, the solace of every soldier." It is the one critical event in the annals of English poetry, and from it has flowed a stream of song that has fertilised the poesy of every age. There is an extraordinary wealth of vivid imagination, of poetic fancy. Classical mythology, mediæval romance, Greek legends, popular superstitions, stories from the New World, the contest between Roman Catholicism and Protestants, Renaissance ideals, all inspired the poet's verse, while he painted the various scenes in gorgeous colouring and instilled his sublime moral teaching, while the knights of Holiness, Chastity, Temperance, Justice, Truth fight the battles of the Lord against all that is base and degrading to the soul of man. The Red Cross knight represents the Church Militant; Una is the Queen herself, and the scarlet-clad Duessa is Roman Catholicism, as typified by Mary Queen of Scots. It was a disaster to English literature that the work was never completed in published form. Irish rebellions have much to answer for, and none more so than that of 1599, which doomed his Irish home to flames and with it the three last books of the *Faerie Queene* and doubtless several other literary masterpieces. The poet passed away soon after this tragic event broken-hearted by his misfortunes, having left his mark upon literary history and a name that will never die.

Amongst the crowd of Elizabethans we can only mention the names of Drayton, most prolific of

authors, Samuel Daniel, Hudson, John Markham, Thomas Achely, John Weever, Charles Middleton, Henry Constable, Sir Edward Dyer, Charles Fitzgeoffry and William Warner, some of whose contemporaries even presumed to rank him on a level with Spenser and called him the Homer and Virgil of his age, his principal work being *Albion's England*.

Then there was Sir John Davis (1570–1626), a learned lawyer and politician, philosopher and poet, author of the *Orchestra* and the *Immortality of the Soul*, in which he sets forth the process of God's art in fashioning the soul of man after His image. The opening verse of his Dedication to Queen Elizabeth may be quoted :

> " To the clear majesty which in the north
> Doth like another Sun in glory rise,
> Which standeth fixed yet spreads her heavenly worth,
> Loadstone to hearts and loadstar to all eyes.
> Stay long (sweet spirit) ere thou to Heaven depart
> Who mak'st each place a Heaven wherein thou art."

Gloriana liked such flattery and Davis was a very courtly poet. His *Hymns of Astræa* is an acrostic poem, the initial letters of each verse forming the words *Elizabetha Regina*. His *Orchestra* is a poem on dancing and was left unfinished, and contains a dialogue between Penelope and one of her wooers.

Foremost among the great names of prose writers, of course, stands that of Francis Lord Bacon, whose *Essays* mark a turning point in

English style. With him may be ranked the learned author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Richard Hooker, who, in the quietude of a country Buckinghamshire vicarage and in despite of a quarrelsome and discontented wife, wrote his magnificent work, which is still the textbook of divinity students and has an extraordinary literary merit apart from the study of Churchmanship. As I have mentioned the names of divines I must not omit that of Dr. Donne (1573–1631), Dean of St. Paul's, whom Dryden called " the greatest wit though not the best poet of our nation." It has been said of him that his writing was rugged and uncouth, that he had no ear for music and was regardless of harmony, but he was no less a true poet and was not far from the best. He did not write with the intention of publishing anything, and most of his poetry was composed in early life.

Donne's contemporary, Bishop Joseph Hall (1574–1656), has been styled the Christian Seneca, and was remarkable for his knowledge, depth of thought and eloquence of expression. He was one of the first of the satirists and wrote in an animated style. During the sufferings he endured in later life he consoled himself with literature and his books and adorned his age by his learning and piety. Of travel-books and histories there were several, Hakluyt, Knolles, Sir Walter Raleigh and a school of literary criticism grew up. A variety of pamphlet literature was seen in the booksellers' shops, creating

and developing the public taste for reading and letters. But I have no more space in which to record the wonderful burst of literary power that occurred in the period we are studying apart from the drama, and for a study of the players and their plays we will turn to the next chapter.

XV

PLAYS AND PLAYERS

IF we would go back to the origin of the English drama we must place ourselves in mediæval times, and watch the performances of the old Miracle Plays in the streets of Chester or York or other city. The subjects were scriptural, the Creation of the World, Noah's Flood, scenes from the New Testament and the Lives of Saints. The streets were the theatres of the people. The stage was constructed on wheels, in order that it might be drawn to " all the eminent parts of the city for the better advantage of spectators." It consisted of three platforms ; the highest represented Heaven, where God and His angels dwelt ; glorified saints played their parts on the second platform, and below them acted the living men and women. In one corner was " hell's mouth," a huge dark cavern, resounding with yells and shrieks, sending forth fire and smoke. Strange to say, this was the centre of the comic element of the performance ; troops of merry demons constantly issued forth from this cave of horrors, and the Devil was represented as

a very comic person who made the spectators roar with laughter by his buffoonery and strange jests. In course of time the upper platforms were removed and only living characters represented.

The trades' guilds performed these plays, and one of the objects of a new guildhall at York in the fifteenth century was to provide a convenient place for the plays to be performed in. The Chester plays were very famous, composed by a monk and acted by the guilds. Here is a programme arranged for a whole week :

1. The Bakers and Tanners bring forth the *Falling of Lucifer.*
2. Drapers and Hosiers—*The Creation of the World.*
3. Drawers of Dee and Waterleaders—*Noah and his Ship.*
4. Barbers, Wax Chandlers and Leeches—*Abraham and Isaac.*
5. Coopers, Wire-drawers and Pinners—*King Balak, Balaam and Moses.*
6. Wrights, Slaters, Tilers, Daubers and Thatchers—*The Nativity of our Lord.*
7. Painters, Broderers and Glaziers—*The Shepherds' Offering.*
8. Vintners and Merchants—*King Herod and the Mount Victorial.*
9. Mercers and Spicers—*The Three Kings of Colin."*

I have told before in my book on *Our English Towns*, the story of these Miracle Plays, of which the most famous were those acted at York, Chester, Hull and Coventry, but they seem to have been usual in many other places, wherein their presence seems little known, and it is only by delving amongst the old Churchwardens' Account Books that we can discover traces of the players. Thus, in those of St. Lawrence's Church, Reading, we find items for a "crescloth for Adam to make 1 pair of hosen and 1 ell for a doublett," for "coarse canvass to make xiii caps," and "ii ells of crescloth for Eve's coat"; and sundry other entries referring to "dyed flax for wigs, a quior of paper, a doublett of leather," and Sybil Darling received "for nails for the sepulchre and for resin to the resurrection play iid," the resin being used for the illumination at the moment of the Resurrection.

Perhaps the people grew weary of the sameness of these performances. At any rate, *Moralities* were introduced, in which dialogues were carried on by allegorical personages, and the characters impersonated virtues and vices; but the Devil was so popular a character that his services were retained. He continued to be the buffoon of the performance, flourished his dagger of lath, belaboured the actors and kept the audience in a roar of laughter by his boisterous merriment. All this was doubtless very childish and silly, but there were also other forms of amusement which contributed to the early

development of the Shakespearean drama. For centuries there had been pageants in the City of London. To celebrate the return of a conquering king, such as Henry V after Agincourt, the accession of a sovereign or other great State occasion, there were "Ridings in the Cheap," and a wonderful display of allegorical pomp. Triumphal chariots, adorned with paintings, enriched with gold and silver and rare jewels, and figures bearing the banners of kings and mayors and the companies with the arms of founders, were drawn through the streets. A virgin, the crest of the Mercers' Company, sat on a high throne, dressed in a robe of white satin, decked with gold and jewels; her long, dishevelled flaxen hair was adorned with pearls and gems, and crowned with a rich coronet. Her attendants were Fame blowing her trumpet, Vigilance, Wisdom and other personified virtues, and the nine Muses with eight pages of honour walked on foot and Triumph was her charioteer. Nine white Flanders' horses drew the huge machine, each horse being mounted by some emblematical figure, such as Asia, America, Victory, etc. Grooms and Roman lictors in crimson garb and twenty savages, or "green men," throwing squibs and fireworks completed the pageant. There were endless such exhibitions both in the streets and on the river. Then when Queen Mary went through London before her coronation a lofty pageant welcomed her in Gracechurch Street, and on the top stood an angel in green with

a trumpet in her hand, and when the trumpeter, who was secretly hidden within the pageant, did sound his trumpet, the angel put his trumpet to his mouth and pretended to blow. At Norwich Queen Elizabeth saw Mercury parading before her in a coach covered with birds and " naked spirits hanging by the heels in the air, and clouds cunningly painted out, as though by some thunder-crack they had been shaken and tormented."

I have no space wherein to describe the " princely pleasures " prepared by the Earl of Leicester for the Queen's entertainment at Kenilworth Castle, and everyone has doubtless read an account of them in Sir Walter Scott's novel. Imagination, classical lore and mythology and poetical fancy devised all kinds of scenes and pageants. The Lady of the Lake, Sylvanus, Pomona, Ceres, Bacchus, Jupiter and all that Olympus or Fairy-land could produce went to swell the pageant, and a masque told of the delivery of the Lady of the Lake from the power of Merlin and the " villain of the piece," Sir Bruce Sans Petie, and Proteus rode on a dolphin and the nymphs and gods of the sea sang the praises of Gloriana.

Then we have the Ludi or court spectacles which were performed in Henry VIII's time. A moving rock decorated with trees and flowers slowly entered the hall, and then poured forth knights and ladies, or allegorical personages, who danced and sang or performed some interlude, and then retired

to the recesses of the rock which slowly moved away. The interlude was a link between the morality and the regular comedy and tragedy, and John Heywood was the author of many of these. One of them is *A Mery Play betwene the Pardoner, and the Frere, the Curate and neighbour Pratte,* printed in 1533. These interludes consisted of only one act; there were no different scenes, and were only the embryo of regular comedy. I have already mentioned *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* the earliest regular plays known to us, and *Gorboduc,* the earliest tragedy written by Sackville. From these beginnings the Elizabethan and Shakespearean drama was evolved. *Gorboduc* was performed before the Queen in 1562 by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple. In the halls of the Inns of Court dramatic performances, whether masques or interludes, and classical dramas, frequently took place, and also at the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge.

I have said that the earliest theatres were the inn-yards with their surrounding galleries. Players were deemed by the Law to be "rogues and vagabonds," until they became members of some nobleman's special company of players. Amongst these were the Earl of Leicester's, Lord Abergavenny's, Lord Arundel's, Queen Elizabeth's, Lord Chamberlain's and Lord Oxford's companies; and there were a few others.

R. Willis in *Mount Tabor* (published soon after

Shakespeare's time) describes very excellently and clearly the procedure of the production of a play or interlude in a provincial town or city. It was as follows :

" In the city of Gloucester, the manner is (as I think it is in other like corporations) that when players of interludes come to town, they first attend the mayor, to inform him what nobleman's servants they are, and so to get licence for their public playing ; and if the mayor like the actors, or would shew respect to their lord and master, he appoints them to play their first play before himself and the aldermen and common council of the city ; and that is called the mayor's play, where everyone that will, comes in without money, the mayor giving the players a reward as he thinks fit to shew respect unto them. At such a play my father took me with him, and made me stand between his legs, as he sat upon one of the benches, where we saw and heard very well. The play was called *The Cradle of Security*, wherein was personated a king or some great prince, with his courtiers of several kinds, amongst which three ladies were in special grace with him ; and they keeping him in delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver counsellors, hearing of sermons, and listening to good counsel and admonitions, that in the end they got him to lie down in a cradle upon the stage, where these three ladies joining in a sweet song rocked him asleep, that he snorted again, and in the meantime closely conveyed under the cloths wherewithal he was covered, a vizard like a swine's snout upon his face, with three wire chains fastened thereunto, the

other end whereof being holden severally by those three ladies, who fall to singing again, and then discovered his face, that the spectators might see how they had transformed him, going on with their singing. Whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another door at the farthest end of the stage, two old men, the one in blue, with a sergeant at arms, his mace on his shoulder, the other in red, with a drawn sword in his hand, and leaning with the other hand upon the other's shoulder; and so they two went along in a soft pace round about by the skirt of the stage, till at last they came to the cradle, when all the court was in greatest jollity; and then the foremost old man with his mace stroke a fearful blow upon the cradle; whereat all the courtiers, with the three ladies and the vizard, all vanished; and the desolate prince starting up bare-faced, and finding himself thus sent for to judgment, made a lamentable complaint of his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This prince did personate in the moral, the wicked of the world; the three ladies, Pride, Covetousness, and Luxury; the two old men, the end of the world, and the last judgment."

Mrs. Stopes tells us in her recently published work how the first theatres began to be built. James Burbage was their first designer. He and his company, then in the service of the Earl of Leicester, had been forbidden to perform in inn-yards or open spaces; so he determined to build for himself a special house for his plays and players. He discovered a convenient spot in Shoreditch, beyond

Finsbury Fields, just outside the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor.[1] There the first theatre arose. It was built of timber, and the design was framed after the fashion of an inn-yard, with roof of thatch sheltering the galleries and stage, but open in the centre, so that the "groundlings," who had no seats, were exposed to the wind and weather. The "Theatre," as it was called, was not a very palatial place, this glorified shed, which first opened its doors in 1576. Soon there arose a rival play-house, the "Curtain," erected by someone whose name has not been preserved, and Philip Henslowe built two theatres in the historic region of Bankside, on the south of the Thames, the "Rose" and the "Swan." Poor James Burbage had a troubled life, harassed by lawsuits, the recurrence of the plague and disturbances outside his theatre by riotous folk. The Court loved the plays, but the Lord Mayor and the civic authorities persecuted the players and Puritans preached and denounced them. James Burbage acquired part of the site of the Blackfriars' house for a theatre, and Play-House Yard still preserves its memories. Then for divers reasons after James Burbage's death his sons, Cuthbert and Richard, bodily removed the "Theatre" to the Bankside near St. Saviour's Church, and called it the "Globe," inscribing over the entrance, "Totus mundus agit histrionem," which may have suggested to Shakespeare the opening line of the

[1] *Burbage and Shakespeare's Stage*, by Mrs. C. C. Stopes, p. 19.

soliloquy of Jaques in *As You Like It*, "All the world's a stage." A tablet on a wall marks the site of this wonderful play-house which witnessed the triumphs of the Shakespearean drama famed throughout the world.

We have seen the outside of these theatres over which a flag waved when the performances were going on. Let us look inside. Before us was a large open stage projecting into what is now the stalls or the pit. At the back was a rear stage that could be curtained off, with a gallery above it; on either side a door leading to the living rooms with windows above the doors. There was no scenery. The audience had to exercise its imagination and to help the spectators: a label was suspended over the front of the stage to tell in what place or country the action was going on. This defect is ridiculed by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy*. "Now," he says, "you shall see three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by we hear news of a shipwreck in the same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke: then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. While in the meantime two armies fly in, represented with four swords and two bucklers; and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?" It was all rather a make-believe. But what was the use of the rear stage

and the gallery? Alas! we cannot be certain. No one has ever seen a play acted as did the Elizabethans. Perhaps the scenes were presented alternately; scene i on the front stage, scene ii on the back stage, and so on. Perhaps it was all a haphazard arrangement, just as Sir Philip describes it; and you could have imagined yourself in a castle or hall, a bed-chamber or a church, though the trees of the forest had not been removed and the blare of trumpets of the fighting hosts consisting of three or four "supers" had scarcely died away. It is not to be supposed that the arrangements in all the theatres were the same; playwrights and managers altered things to suit their convenience; but it should be remembered that there was no drop-curtain, there were no intervals between the scenes; otherwise the patience and strength of the standing crowd of "groundlings" would have been exhausted. The action and speech were rapid and the interest never flagged.

The stage was strewn with rushes. The performance usually began with a prologue, spoken by an actor clad in a long black velvet cloak, who was introduced with a flourish of trumpets. The actors played in masks and perukes, and female parts were taken by boys or young men. The audience was perhaps as interesting as the players. It was very mixed. The majority consisted of a keen-witted but ill-educated popular crowd, some young men about town, fops and beaux, and

some patrons of fine taste and exalted position. The playwright had to please the groundlings as well as the lords, and mingle comedy and coarseness with choice poetry. We have seen how Ben Jonson adapted the classical story of Hero and Leander in *Bartholomew Fair* to meet the popular taste. In the galleries sat the citizens and their wives and daughters clad in ruffs and farthingales. On the floor of the theatre stood the crowd of poorer folk, apprentices, men, and women too, and if we are to believe the strictures of Stubbes the behaviour was not very discreet in the "great wooden O, the pit," where they amused themselves with reading, criticism, playing at cards and dice, drinking ale and wine, munching apples and smoking. Noblemen and gentlemen sat on the stage and paid sixpence for the stools with which they were accommodated, while their pages waited behind and supplied them with pipes and tobacco. Fops loved thus to display their figures and their finery, their rose hatbands, standing collars and shagged ruffs, their cabbage-shoe strings, French doublets and Spanish hose, short gaudy cloaks, rapiers and hangers. If they did not by their attire attract sufficient attention, they talked loud and railed at the play, the actors and the author, perhaps in the midst of Shakespeare's most pathetic scenes; and if the groundlings, disturbed by the din, murmured and expressed their dislike, they withdrew with a flourish of magnificent contempt for the plebeians

VIEW OF A STAGE TAKEN FROM KIRKMAN'S DROLLS (1672+3)
Showing much the same arrangements as Close of the Elizabethan Drama

and sought other distractions. Such was the theatre which first saw our poet's masterpieces.

The wooden theatre, the Globe, was burnt down in 1613 and was replaced by a stone hexagonal building, wherein during the last two years of Shakespeare's life his latest plays were doubtless staged.

We have sketched briefly the early history of the drama in England, and witnessed the interludes, masques and pageants and pastimes. Into the midst of this world of strange elements, of Renaissance suggestions, of native histrionic art, of classical lore, of pastorals, poetry and romance, stepped the great playwrights of the regular drama of whom our Shakespeare was the chief. A vast number of plays have been entirely lost except their names. There were fifty-two plays presented between 1568 and 1580, according to the lists of the Master of the Revels, and not one has survived, though some of them may have formed the foundation of other plays. We know that even Shakespeare was employed in adapting old plays to suit the improved taste of his time. A few have remained. There was a *Damon and Pytheas*, by Richard Edwards, performed at Christ Church, Oxford, before the Queen. He was very highly esteemed by his contemporaries. *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* contains much of his work. But I can only find space to notice these early dramatists. There was George Peele, author of the *Arraignment of Paris*, the *Love*

of King David and Fair Bethsabe and the *Old Wives' Tale, a Pleasant conceited Comedy*, the story somewhat resembling Milton's *Comus*. Robert Green, in the midst of his writing scurrilous pamphlets, wrote five plays of a farcical nature, of which the *History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is the best known. Head and shoulders above him and Peele, and, indeed, above all the dramatists before Shakespeare, stood Christopher Marlowe, whose *Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, Tamburlaine the Great, Edward II, The Rich Jew of Malta*, took the world by storm. Lamb compares Marlowe's description of the abdication of Edward II to that of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, and the splendour of poesy in Marlowe's *Jew* with that in the *Merchant of Venice*.

Poor Marlowe's fate was tragic. He took to riotous courses, as did several others of his age: Green, Peele, Nash and others. It is noted in a life of Bishop Hall that poets began to be men of the world, neglected study and retirement, frequented taverns, became libertines and buffoons, and exhilarated the circles of the polite and profligate. Dekker's *Gul's Horne Book* and Belman's *Night Walks* record the lives of the men-about-town of the period. It was a feverish, restless world, the world of Elizabethan London, and recklessness, licentiousness and irregularity quickly closed the careers of some of these men. Then there was Kyd, the author of the *Spanish Tragedy;* Webster, who

wrote the *Duchess of Malpy ;* Lodge, the author of the *Wounds of Civil War* and of *Rosalynde,* which supplied Shakespeare with the plot of *As You Like It.*

Of the work of Shakespeare as a poet and a dramatist it is beyond the scope of this book to describe. I am writing about the England Shakespeare knew, and not about the character, achievements and the poetic power and genius of the man himself. That would be a thrice-told tale. Tributes flow to him from every land. Great scholars sing his praise, and a far larger work than this modest volume would be needed to analyse his plays and poems and point out their excellences, their grandeur, the sweetness of his music, the nobility of his language, his surpassing genius.

To others then we assign the task to sing our Shakespearean's praise, while we proceed to name some of his contemporaries who shine like little stars when compared with his great glorious sun. Foremost amongst them was George Chapman, excellent scholar and poet, who, so Charles Lamb believed, came nearest to Shakespeare in descriptive and didactic writing. Then there were Webster, Middleton, Dekker, Marston, Robert Tailor, Tourneur and Rowley. Of Ben Jonson some one wrote :

" The Muse's fairest light in no dark time
The wonder of a learned age, the line
Which none can pass, the most proportioned wit,
To Nature the best judge of which was fit,
The deepest, plainest, highest, clearest pen,"
etc., etc., etc.

Such fulsome compliments would scarcely have pleased "honest Ben." His two tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, were worthless. It is said that it was through the kindness of Shakespeare that his play, *Every Man in His Humour*, was brought out at the Rose Theatre in 1596. His *Every Man out of His Humour* in the following year attracted the Queen to the theatre. Some of his comedies achieved fame, *Volpone or the Fox*, *Epicene or the Silent Woman* and *The Alchemist*, and his masques, such as *Cynthea's Revels*, performed in 1600 by the children of the Queen's Chapel, and his unfinished *The Sad Shepherd*. His *Poetaster*, a satire, was performed at the Blackfriars Theatre in 1601, wherein he opposed Dekker and Marston, and the former replied to it in a counter satire, *Satiromastrix or the untrussing of a humorous Poet*. He frequented the Mermaid Tavern in company with Shakespeare, Fletcher, Selden, Carew, Donne and others, and took part in the wit-contests. Fuller describes these contests between Jonson and our poet. The former was like a Spanish galleon, the latter an English ship of war. Jonson was far higher in learning, but solid and slow in performance. Our poet was lesser in bulk, but higher in sailing; he could turn with all tides and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.

Nearest to Shakespeare rank his friends, Beaumont and Fletcher, whose dramas are essentially poetical and imaginative, though inferior in dramatic

power to our national poet's plays. Towards the end of his life his contemporaries were Philip Massinger, a lesser Jonson, John Ford and James Shirley, who carried on the traditions of the English stage, until Puritanism and the triumph of the sectaries dethroned the kings and queens of tragedy and comedy, as they led forth the Royal Martyr to execution at Whitehall. The theatres were closed and stage-plays prohibited. A few strolling companies defied the law, but the drama died until the Restoration of the Monarchy again restored it to life.

XVI

SPORTS AND PASTIMES OF THE PEOPLE

HUNTING and hawking were the general sports of gentry in Shakespeare's time. The Queen was a notable huntress. An eye-witness records her prowess at Kenilworth during her magnificent entertainment by Leicester in 1575 ; and towards the end of her long life, when at Oatlands, she is described in a contemporary letter as still " well and excellently disposed to hunting, for every second day she is on horseback and continues the sport long." Shakespeare, who, as I have already stated, was well learned in the Noble Art of Venerie, thus enumerates the three beasts which were hunted :

> " The timorous hare,
> Or at the fox which lives by subtlety,
> Or at the roe which no encounter dare " ;

and he seems to have loved best to hunt the hare, though his gentle heart grieved over the poor animal's sufferings.

In *Venus and Adonis* the graphic description is given of the poor hare " outrunning the wind,"

" cranking and crossing with a thousand doubles," seeking refuge amongst a flock of sheep or a herd of deer or rabbits, and then far off upon a hill " standing on hinder legs with listening ear " :

> " To hearken if his foe pursue him still :
> Anon their loud alarum he doth hear,
> And now his grief may be compared well
> To one sore sick, that hears the passing bell."

There were several writers on hunting in Shakespeare's time, which fact shows that it was very popular. The anonymous treatise on the *Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting* was published in 1575. Sir Thomas Cokaine wrote *A Short Treatise on Hunting, compyled for the Delight of Noblemen and Gentlemen* (1591), and Gervase Markham, the son of a Nottinghamshire squire, soldier, poet, playwright, sportsman and farmer, published several treatises on country sport. His *Gentleman's Academy* is stated to have been taken from the *Book of St. Albans of Hawking, Hunting and Armoury*, originally compiled by Dame Juliana Berners.[1] *Country Contentments ; or the Husbandmen's Recreation* tells about the art of riding, hunting, shooting, hawking, coursing with greyhounds, etc., and in Markham's *Cavallarie* are disclosed all that concerns horses and horsemanship and various

[1] I need not discuss the identity of this sporting nun, who was usually supposed to have been the Prioress of Sopwell, until historians proved that there never was a lady of that name on the list of Prioresses.—Cf. *Hunting*, by His Grace the Duke of Beaufort (Badminton Library).

tricks and secrets which seem to us poor twentieth-century folk incredible. Armed with such works the country gentleman of the seventeenth lacked not instruction in the science and art of hunting.

The best way to understand the methods of hunting adopted during the time of Shakespeare is to read what contemporary writers have set down concerning it. Our friend, Hentzner, thus describes the sport :

" The huntsmen who had been ordered for the occasion, and who live in splendid separate lodges in these parks (the royal parks), made some capital sport for his Highness. In the first enclosure his Highness shot off the leg of a fallow deer, and the dogs soon after caught the animal. In the second, they chased a stag for a long time backwards and forwards with particularly good hounds, over an extensive and delightful plain ; at length his Highness shot him in front with an English cross-bow, and this deer the dogs finally worried and caught. In the third, the greyhounds chased a deer, but much too soon ; for they caught it directly, even before it could get out into the open plain."

It seems to have been poor sport for the deer. Usually a stand was erected covered with boughs, and the Queen or other privileged sportsmen shot the deer as it was driven past with a cross-bow. The sport was decidedly cruel, as the animal did not have much chance of escape. But cruel sports were the fashion in that time.

A HUNTING SCENE

From "The noble Arte of Venerie," by Turbeville

Shakespeare describes a similar hunting scene in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Stag-hunting, however, was a nobler sport, as the animal was chased in the open country. I have already quoted Shakespeare's description of a good hound; he seems to have been an equally good judge of a horse. He tells what a thoroughbred should be:

"In shape, in courage, colour, pace and bone.
Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide."

Very cruel were the bear and bull-baitings, that were commonly witnessed by royalty, noblemen and their wives, and enjoyed much by the populace. Sunday was the great day for these exhibitions, arousing the anger of the Puritans, and especially of Stubbes, the severe critic of the age. The Bear Garden in Bankside was a favourite place of resort. Laneham tells us of such scenes:

"It was a sport very pleasant of these beasts, to see the bear with his pinkey eyes leering after his enemy's approach; the nimbleness and wait of the dogs to take his advantage, and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid the assaults; if he were bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free; but if he were taken once, then what shift with biting, with clawing, with roaring, tossing and tumbling, he would work to wind himself from them; and when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice, with

the blood and slaver about his physiognomy, was a matter of goodly relief."

A more barbarous sport could not well be conceived, unless it were a Spanish bull-fight. In Paris Garden there were two bear gardens. Scaffolds were erected for the spectators. You paid a penny at the gate, another at the entrance to the scaffold, and a third for quiet standing. The Queen liked the sport. In 1559 she gave a splendid dinner to the French and other ambassadors, who were afterwards entertained with the baiting of bulls and bears, and the Queen herself stood with the ambassadors looking on the pastime till six at night. On the following day they went by water to Paris Garden, where they saw a similar entertainment. Some years later the Queen received the Danish Ambassador at Greenwich and treated him to a sight of a bear and bull-baiting, "with other merry disports," says Holinshed; amongst these was a horse with an ape upon its back. I will spare you Hentzner's description, who also records the whipping of a blind bear as a specially humorous proceeding. There are many references to the sport in Shakespeare's plays. In *Macbeth* there is the line:

> "They have ty'd me to a stake; I cannot fly; but bear-like I must fight the course."

In 2 *Henry VI* we find:

> "Are these thy bears? We'll bait these bears to death"

And again :

"Or as a bear encompassed round with dogs."

Hawking was much practised in Shakespeare's time, as it always had been in the preceding ages. It was a graceful and noble sport, and even now has a few enthusiasts. The lore of the sport is too lengthy to be recorded here. Hentzner, writing in 1598, says that it was the general sport of the English nobility, and at this time most of the best treatises upon the subject were written, some of which I have mentioned in connection with hunting. There was also George Turbervile's *Booke of Faulconrie or Hauking* and Latham's *Falconry*. Ladies joined in the sport, and were keen hawkers. There is a picture extant of the Queen going hawking. The sportsman wore gloves to prevent the talons from hurting his hand. The bird wore a hood before it was flown, and had straps of leather, or jesses, attached to its legs, which bore bells. These bells were carefully selected so as to produce a harmonious tone. In one of Thomas Heywood's interludes occur the lines :

"Her bels, Sir Francis, had not both one waighte,
Nor was one semitone above the other.
Me thinkes these Millane bels do sound too full,
And spoile the mounting of your hawke."

Our poet compares Lucretia trembling "as fowls hearing falcon's bells." Great pains were taken in the training of the birds. The sport was at its

zenith in Elizabethan and Jacobean times. At the end of the seventeenth century it had almost passed away. Shakespeare constantly refers to the sport. There are the well-known lines in *Romeo and Juliet*:

> " O, for a falconer's voice,
> To lure this tassel-gentle back again!"

And again:

> " Between two hawks which flies the higher pitch
> I have some shallow spirit of judgment."

He knew thoroughly well the technical terms of falconry, which has a language of its own. Petrucio tells us how to train a falcon:

> " My falcon now is sharp, and passing empty,
> And till she stoop, she must not be full gorg'd,
> For then she never looks upon her lure.
> Another way I have to man my haggard,
> To make her come, and know her keeper's call,
> That is—to watch her as we watch their kites,
> That bate and beat and will not be obedient."

A haggard is a wild bird that has been caught late, and is more difficult to train. This Othello applies figuratively to Desdemona:

> " If I do prove her haggard,
> Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings
> I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
> To prey at fortune."

Harrison does not mention any horses kept for racing. Perhaps being a parson he was ignorant of the sport. However, another clergyman, Bishop Hall, refers in his Satires to horse-racing:

". . . dost thou prize
Thy brute beasts' worth by their dam's qualities ?
Say'st thou this colt shall prove a swift-pac'd steed,
Onely because a Jennet did him breed ?
Or say'st thou this same horse shall win the prize,
Because his dam was swiftest Trunchefice
Or Runcevall his syre ; himself a Gallaway ?
While like a tireling jade he lags half away."

The Chester races were then fully established on the Rodeye, on Shrove Tuesday, instituted by the Company of Saddlers, and the prize was a silver bell ; also at Stamford in Lincolnshire. The Puritan writers, although they were always inveighing against the iniquity of plays, cards, dice and other idle pastimes, seem not to have objected to horse-racing, which, wrote Thomas Northbrooke, " yieldeth good exercise." At the close of our period, in the reign of James I, public races were established in many parts of England, and the courses were named bell-courses, because the prize was a silver bell. Shakespeare alludes to " riding wagers," and makes Imogen say :

" Whose horses have been nimbler than the sands
That run i' the clock's behalf."

Archery, formerly the most popular of pastimes, was ceasing to be of use in the service of war. Hentzner says that in 1598 he saw in the armoury of the Tower of London a great store of cross-bows, bows and arrows. Roger Ascham, most worthy of men, and excellent archer and tutor to

the Queen, wrote the "Toxophilus" in praise of the noble sport in which our ancestors so splendidly excelled and won great victories by their skill. Our foes have taught us less worthy weapons of warfare, and it would be well for humanity if international law enacted that in future wars no other instruments should be used but bows and arrows, lance and sword. Complaints were made during our period of the disuse of the long-bow. In Finsbury Fields the sport had been carried on, and Stow states that before his time it was customary at Bartholomew-tide for the Lord Mayor with the sheriffs and aldermen to go there, and in the presence of a large crowd of citizens to shoot at the standard with broad and light arrows. But Stow declared that the sport had decayed because of the enclosures which prevented the citizens from having space for their exercise, and soon after his death in 1605, and well within the period of our poet's life, a commission was appointed by James I to inquire into the complaints of the citizens, and its efforts were successful in preventing intrusion upon the old archery grounds.

It would be pleasant to recall all Roger Ascham's instructions and directions and the whole art and skill of archery, and when one begins to talk of bowmen and their bows it is difficult to stop. I might tell you of the great shooting match in Gloriana's reign in 1583, when 3000 archers formed a great procession and marched from Merchant

Taylors' Hall through Broad Street to Moorfields, headed by their captain, who was called the Duke of Shoreditch, a title humorously conferred by Henry VIII on the leader of the London archers. The captain conferred spurious titles of dukes and earls upon his officers, and many wore chains of gold; and there were 4000 whifflers and billmen besides pages and footmen—a right royal procession. Each archer had a long-bow and four arrows, and at last they came to Smithfield, where they performed various evolutions and shot at a target. Two of the ancient City Companies, the Bowyers and the Fletchers, were engaged in the art of making bows and arrows, and Stow tells of a large close, called the Tazell, let to the cross-bow makers, wherein they used to shoot at a popinjay, or wooden parrot. There were butts for archery in almost every town and village, and there are constant allusions in the plays to the sport.

Tennis was fashionable. In Shakespeare's time tennis-courts were common in England. Henry VIII had erected "divers fair tennis-courts, bowling allies and a cock-pit" at Whitehall, where they doubtless still remained in the time of his illustrious daughter. Our poet alludes to the game. Polonius, in *Hamlet*, when instructing Reynolds to bear false witness, puts in his mouth:

> "There was he gaming; there overtook in his rouse,
> There falling out at tennis";

and, of course, he mentions the satirical present of a ton of tennis balls sent by the French king to Henry V. At Elvetham, Hants, the Queen saw, in 1591, after dinner, ten of her host's servants fashioning a tennis-court with a cross line in the middle and playing hand-ball " at bord and cord," as they called it, " to the great liking of her highness."

Football was a popular game, and it was of a very rough variety, with general hacking, tripping and charging the opponents. No wonder James I tried to abolish it, declaring it was " meeter for lameing than making able the users thereof."

Our Berkshire registers of this period tell of a terrible event at North Moreton during a football match in Shakespeare's time in 1598, and shows that the game was rough and fast and furious.

This register records the burial of two men, Richard and John Gregorie, and states : " These two men were killed by ould Gunter. Gunter's sonnes and the Gregories fell together by ye yeares (ears) at football. Ould Gunter drew his dagger and broke both their heads, and they died both within a fortnight after." Sad to relate, old Gunter was the parson of the parish. Possibly he was witnessing the savage game. His sons and the Gregories were playing fiercely in the scrum. He saw his boys overthrown by their opponents and, fearing for their lives and carried away by excitement, drew his dagger, and struck the fatal blows. Strange to say, he was not hanged, or

deprived of his living, or even tried for manslaughter. But this is a curious revelation of the fierceness of Elizabethan football.

The poet bears witness to the same fact. Lear says to the steward : (I - IV)

" Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal ?
(*Strikes him.*)
STEWARD : I'll not be struck, my lord.
EARL OF KENT : Nor tripped, neither, you base football player (*tripping up his heels*)."

Shakespeare alludes to football in the *Comedy of Errors* (Act II, scene I) :

" Am I so round with you as you with me,
That like a football you do spurn me thus ?
You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither :
If I last in this service, you must case me in leather."

Barclay, in his *Ship of Fools*, and Waller testify to the fierceness of the game, as also does Stubbes, who thus describes it :

" For as concerning football playing, I protest unto you it may rather be called a friendly kind of fight, than a play or recreation ; a bloody and murdering practice, than a fellowly sport or pastime. For doth not every one lie in wait for his adversary, seeking to overthrow him and to pick him on his nose, though it be upon hard stones, in ditch or dale, in valley or hill, or what place it be he careth not, so he have him down. And he that can serve the most of this fashion, he is counted the only fellow and who but he ? So that by this means, sometimes their necks are broken, sometimes their backs, sometimes

their legs, sometimes their arms, sometime one part thrust out of joint, sometime another, sometime their noses gush out with blood, sometime their eyes start out, and sometimes hurt in one place, sometimes in another. But whosoever scapeth away the best goeth not scot-free, but is either sore wounded, and bruised, so as he dieth of it, or else scapeth very hardly. And no marvel, for they have sleights to meet one betwixt two, to dash him against the heart with their elbows, to hit him under the short ribs with their gripped fists, and with their knees to catch him upon the hip, and to pick him on his neck, with an hundred such murdering devices. And hereof groweth envy, malice, rancour, choler, hatred, displeasure, enmity and what not else : and sometimes fighting, brawling, contention, quarrel picking, murder, homicide and great effusion of blood, as experience daily teacheth."

Knightly tournaments had almost passed away, but tilting at the ring was fashionable at Court and in the tilting grounds of the noble mansions of the great ; while lesser men, farmers and yeomen, played at the quintain, which was of various forms. The Queen witnessed the sport at Kenilworth, and it was usually the accompaniment of rural weddings. A beam turned on a pivot at the top of a post. At one end was a board ; at the other a sack. The combatants rode on horseback and with a pole for a lance charged the board. If he did not show speed and activity the sack swung round and hit him a vigorous blow. The great design was to break the

board fairly and squarely, and to escape the buffeting. Youths and apprentices in London engaged at water-quintain in boats, or charged each other in boat-tilting.

Of fencing I have told elsewhere. Cock-fighting was fairly general in the time of James I. There were some curious customs in northern Grammar Schools relating to the sport. Our poet refers to it very little, but we find Cloten in *Cymbeline* when he was eager to fight and could not find an adversary, complaining, " I must go up and down like a cock that nobody can match."

Athletic contests were not unknown and the Cotswold games at Barton-on-the-Heath at Whitsuntide would be well known to Shakespeare, who doubtless took part in the coursing matches, leaping, cudgel-playing, fighting with sword and buckler, pitching the bar and tossing the pike.[1]

English folk have always loved dancing, whether at Court or on the rural village green. The old English country dances became famous in all the courts of Europe ; but they were not really country dances, but *contré* dances, the partners standing opposite each other as in Sir Roger de Coverley. There were several kinds of dancing popular in our period, such as the pavon described by Beatrice, which took its name from *pavo*, a peacock, a grave and stately dance, the gentlemen dressed in rich

[1] *Shakespeare and Sport*, by Sir Sidney Lee (article in the *Field*).

attire, scholars in their gowns, peers in their mantles, and the ladies in gowns with long trains, the motion resembling that of the strutting of a peacock. The canary and the brawl were also favourites, and also the lavolta, thus described in the *Orchestra* of Sir John Davis :

> " A lofty jumping or a leaping round
> Where arm in arm two dancers are entwined,
> And whirl themselves in strict embraces bound ;
> And still their feet an anapest do sound."

Our friend Hentzner tells us that " the English excell in dancing." High leaping and stately movements were considered essentials, in which accomplishment our ancestors excelled and were praised by all foreigners ; and surpassed all other nations. Queen Elizabeth was complimented by Melvil upon her high dancing. A dancer in *Winter's Tale* is reported " to have danced twelve foot and a half by the squier."

The London damsels used to dance before their master's doors, an " open pastime " which Stow remembered to have seen in his youth and he regretted its discontinuance, and on May Days and other festivals the lads and lasses on the village green used to trip it merrily. It did not escape the lashings of the Puritans, and I cannot set down here all that Philip Stubbes declares against dancing, " the horrible vice of pestiferous dauncing." He calls it " the noble science of heathen divelrie," and one that no Christian may indulge in. Certainly

dancing was a vigorous exercise in his day, if he proclaims truly that "some have broke their legs with skipping, leaping, turning and vawting, and some have come by one hurt, and some by another." However, we have no time to consider Puritanical objections.

The country squire loved cards, draughts, dice and chess. It was over a game at chess that Ferdinand and Miranda made love in the *Tempest*. Billiards, too, he liked, and Cleopatra says to Charmian, "Let's to billiards." At Knole there is a billiard-table that is similar to those in use in early Jacobean times, the balls being pushed along with a sort of cue which ladies used to use before they became so proficient as they now are. The squire had his bowling green and was fond of the game on a summer's evening. Shakespeare alludes to the game when he says:

> "Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground
> I have tumbled past the throw."

In towns there were bowling alleys often attached to taverns, and these were regarded as very bad places for servants and apprentices, who were forbidden to frequent them. John Earle, in his *Microcosmographie* (1628), says: "A bowl-alley is a place where there was three things thrown away besides bowls, to wit, time, money and curses, and the last ten to one. The best sport in it is the gamester's, and he enjoys it that looks on and bets not. . . . To

give you the moral of it: it is the emblem of the world, or the world's ambition, where most are short or over, or wide, or wrong-biassed, and some few jostle to the 'mistress' fortune."

Shakespeare loved all the familiar scenes and joyous customs of the country, and doubtless took his part in them in his youthful days. As a boy he would have played at "whipping of tops," "hide and seek," "more sacks to the mill," "pushpin" and "nine men's morris." All these are mentioned by him, and also "ninepins," "quoits," "leap-frog" and "prisoners' base." The humours of the sheep-shearing festival are described in *Winter's Tale*. There were many high days and festivals to be observed, especially Christmas and its holidays, which were duly and riotously kept in court and hall and parish. A Lord of Misrule presided over the sports and fooleries. The houses and churches were decked with evergreens, and the young folks danced round the standards that were set up. Large feasts were held to which poor folk were bidden, and many rich men kept open house. The boar's head was a favourite dish, which was ushered in with great pomp and music. At the Universities and Inns of Court there were great functions and feasts, and the Lord of Misrule exercised tyrannical sway over the assemblies, instituting all kinds of mischievous pranks.

Stubbes's description of Christmas is too long to be quoted here, but it is extremely graphic and

severe in its condemnation. Then there were the diversions of Plough Monday, the time-honoured rejoicing, on May Day, when the May-pole was set up and much dancing ensued. This day was a happy one for milk-maids, who used to borrow all the plate they could muster and then made a pyramid on their pails and danced from door to door. Easter Day and Hock-tide brought their accustomed festivities. Fires were lighted on St. John's Eve and Harvest Homes were popular rejoicings. Hentzner fortunately witnessed a Harvest Home in Berkshire, and thus describes it :

" As we were returning to our inn, we happened to meet some country people celebrating their harvest home : their last load of corn they crown with flowers, having besides an image richly dressed, by which, perhaps, they signify Ceres ; this they keep moving about, while the men and women and men and maid servants riding through the streets in the cart, shout as hard as they can till they arrive at the barn."

Church ales, also, diversified the rural life of the villages, and caused much amusement and the friendly meeting together of neighbours from other parishes. The churchwardens used to go round the villages and collect from the people a store of provisions and malt from the farmers in preparation for a feast. Near the church stood the church house, which belonged to the parish and was in

the custody of the churchwardens. Aubrey thus describes it :

" In every parish was a church house, to which belonged spits, crocks, and other utensils for dressing provisions. Here the housekeepers met. The young people were there too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, etc., the ancients (i.e. the old folks) sitting gravely by and looking on."

This account presents a pleasant picture of simple, rural merriment. The ale that was brewed was not a very heady beverage. These feasts were usually held on the festival of the dedication of the church, the proceeds being devoted to the maintenance of the poor, the restoration of the church, or other worthy object. Sometimes they were held at Easter and Whitsuntide, perhaps four times a year, or as often as money was wanted or a feast desired. On these occasions an arbour of boughs was erected in the churchyard, and was called Robin Hood's Bower, where the maidens collected money for the " ales," and all went " merry as a marriage bell " ; but the Puritans thought that it went too merrily and tried to put an end to them and finally succeeded.

Philip Stubbes's righteous soul was much scandalised by these " church ales." He describes them as existing " in certain towns where drunken Bacchus bears swaie. . . . Then when this nippitatum, this husse-cappe, as they call it, this nectar of life, is set

abroad, well is he that can get the soonest to it, and spends the most at it, for he is counted the godliest man of all the rest, and most in God's favour, because it is spent upon his church forsooth. If all be true, which they say, they bestow that money which is got thereby for the repaire of their churches and chappels; they buy bookes for the services, cupps for the celebration of the sacraments, surplesses for Sir John, and such other necessaries," etc.

Wakes (or, as he calls them, wakesses) were sources of gluttonie and drunkenness, and Stubbes states that many spent more at one of these feasts than in all the year besides. Autolycus brought his wares to them, as he did to the sheep-shearing and church ales:

> "Lawn as white as driven snow;
> Cyprus, black as e'er was crow;
> Gloves, as sweet as damask roses;
> Masks for faces, and for noses;
> Bugle bracelet, necklace-amber;
> Perfume for my lady's chamber;
> Golden quoifs and stomachers;
> For my lads to give their dears;
> Pins, and poking sticks of steel,
> Which maids lack from head to heel:
> Come, buy of me: come buy, come buy,
> Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry."

And hard-hearted must the lads have been if they did not give their lasses a "fairing," some tawdry (St. Awdry) laces, a cape, silk and thread, or a ballad fresh from town, or any other fine things from the pedlar's pack.

Such scenes as these, such pastimes, games and sports helped to make a "merry England"; and though times were often hard, and plagues were frequent and life uncertain, village life was, perhaps, happier then than now, and the joy of life greater, in spite of Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses* and other Puritanical declamations.

XVII

ELIZABETHAN COSTUME

SHAKESPEARE'S period was a time of many inventions, and nothing is more notable than the changes wrought in dress. In order to give a full account of the eccentricities of Elizabethan costume I should be obliged to quote the sayings of endless satirists and reproduce dozens of quaint portraits of celebrities of the period. But I will spare you most of this, and try only to picture the dress of the men and women Shakespeare knew or strolled with in the streets of London City. Thomas Dekker, in his *Seven Deadly Sinnes of London*, compares an Englishman's dress to a traitor's body that has been hanged, drawn and quartered, and set up in several places. Part of it was in Denmark; the collar of his doublet and the belly belonged to France; the wing and narrow sleeve to Italy; the short waiste hung over a Dutch shop in Utrecht; his huge slops belonged to Spain. Poland gave him his boots. The block for his head altered faster than the feltmaker could fit him; and hence we received the name of blockheads.

And so we who mocked every nation because they kept to one fashion, yet stole patches from every one of them, to piece out our pride, were laughing-stocks to them, because their cut so scurvily became us.

Fashions changed so swiftly that Andrew Boorde, when trying to describe an Englishman's dress, after sundry endeavours gave up the task, and drew a naked man with a pair of shears and a piece of cloth in his hands, so that he could make a garment that satisfied him. Harrison notes these changes and says that he cannot describe the dress of an Englishman, as one day he appears in Spanish guise, while on the next he adopts the French mode, and subsequently high German, Turkish, or Moorish gowns and Barbarian sleeves please him in turn, and make him look as absurd as a dog in a doublet.

England was then young in mind and heart, and took a childish pleasure in such vanities, which were extremely costly and led to all manner of mischief, fickleness and folly; and the women followed the men in devising novelties and imitating the fashions of the sterner sex, so that it was sometimes hard to tell the difference.

In the early days of Elizabeth two changes from the previous style were remarkable. Formerly the doublet had long skirts or bases; these disappeared, and instead of the long hosen worn by gentlemen in the former reigns, they wore breeches or trunk hose

or slops and stockings or nether-stocks. The trunk hose, also called "galligascoynes" were of French origin of the Burgundian type, and were large and round, almost capable of "containing a bushell of wheat or to carry malt to a mill."[1] Another style of French breeches fitted tight to the leg, terminated below the knee in one or more rolls called "canions." Venetian and Spanish trunk hose varied, the former being fastened at the knee by silken points or buttons. The large and wide variety of the English style in 1566 changed to close-fitting breeches, but towards the end of the century the old fashion revived. The transformations of the doublet were remarkable. At first it fitted closely to the body, but later on it was stuffed or "bombasted," until it became known as the "pease-cod-bellied" doublet. Such is that which the familiar figure of Mr. Punch presents. Ben Jonson alludes to this great bellied doublet.

Then there was, what Dekker calls, the "treble-quadruple dædalian ruff," which came into fashion with Gloriana and was of Spanish origin. It increased in size every year, until towards the end of the century it was pronounced "monstrous." Ben Jonson alludes to the "three-piled ruff." It was worn by both men and women, and necessitated the use of starch to keep it in order, and there are allusions to "stiff-necked rabatos that have more

[1] *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*, by Thomas Wright, 1601.

arches for Pride to row under than can stand under five London bridges."

Over the doublet was worn a cloak which varied with the prevailing taste. Sometimes it was of Spanish fashion, then of French, next of Italian or Dutch, and then a jacket without sleeves called a mandevil or mandillian. Puffings or slashings ornamented the cloaks, doublets and sleeves, and divers colours with unsavoury names were introduced. The old brown and russet colours somewhat resembled our familiar khaki. Stubbes tells of cloaks bordered with " bugles and other kinds of glass." The head-covering varied with the rest of the costume. In 1571, in order to encourage the wool and clothiers' trade, all men, except noblemen, were obliged by Act of Parliament to wear caps of wool made in England. Later on hats, conical or steeple-crowned, or with small crown and huge great brim, adorned with bunches of feathers of various colours, constituted a remarkable headgear. We read of a young coxcomb, changed into the shape of a French puppet, his head dressed up in white feathers like a shuttlecock. He also wore " wings," which are described as lateral prominences extending from each shoulder.

Stockings were ornamented with clocks or quirks or cogs about the ankles and were of many colours. Boots had wide tops and these had fringed " boot-hosen " hanging down to the ankles and " clogged with silk of all colours, with birds, fowles, beasts

and antiques portrayed all over." So says Master Stubbes, who also laughs at the fashion of wearing pantoffles or slippers, or high-heeled cork shoes which caused their wearers to walk in a mincing pace. The costume of the gallant was not complete without a rapier. Some wore rings of gold, stones or pearls in the ears "to improve God's work." The hair was sometimes cut short, or curled or worn long like a woman's, or cut off above or under the ears like a wooden dish. Beards were cut to suit the shape of the face of the individual. A shaven chin, or beard cut short to suit a lean face, making it appear broad; a long slender beard for a round face, and much hair left on the face for the weasel-beaked ones. Men wore gowns, bracelets, gold chains, and loved scent, like the women.

But let us turn to the ladies and see extravagance let loose. They copied the men in their doublets and jerkins which were buttoned to the breast, and had wings on their shoulders. Women's doublets were brought down to a peak in front, and gave place to a long-peaked stomacher. The ruff of lawn or cambric came in with Queen Elizabeth, who brought over some women from Holland to stiffen or starch them. Later on wires and poking-sticks of steel were used to extend the ruff and to make it stick out properly. The farthingale was introduced about the middle of the reign. Head-dresses were very elaborate, the hair being "curled, frizzled and crisped, laid out on wreaths and borders from

one ear to the other." Perukes and false hair were much worn, so that their heads appear "like that of a gorgon saving that they want the crawling snakes of Medusa, to hang sprawling in their hair along their faces." Shakespeare often inveighed against women wearing false hair and painting their faces. The Queen set the fashion. Hentzner noticed that her hair was red. At Tutbury another observer said it was black. The beautiful Mary Queen of Scots also varied the colour of her hair. The ladies wore caps, hats and hoods of sundry kinds, "lattice caps with three horns or corners like the forked caps of Popish priests," as Puritan Stubbes states, who also mentions the ladies' corked shoes, pantoffles and slippers, some of black velvet, some of white, green, yellow, Spanish leather and some of English, stitched with silk and embroidered with gold and silver all over the foot "with other gewgaws innumerable." Silk stockings were first used in England at this time and were of divers colours. Petruchio, in the *Taming of the Shrew*, makes some severe comments on his wife's dresses, to "the sleeves curiously cut," and to the cap :

> "Why, this is moulded on a porringer ;
> A velvet dish ; fie, fie ! 'tis lewd and filthy :
> Why 'tis a cockle on a walnut-shell,
> A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap."

Tight-lacing was then as fashionable as it was in recent times. A contemporary writer says : "To

SOME COSTUMES OF THE POET'S PERIOD

become slender in the waiste and to have a straight spagnolized body, what pinching, what girding, what cingling will they not endure? Yea, sometimes with iron-plates, with whale-bones and other such trash, that their very skin and quick flesh is eaten in and consumed to the bones: whereby they sometimes work their own death." A pale complexion was esteemed a mark of beauty, and women were said to have swallowed gravel, ashes, coals, dust, tallow and candles, so on to produce a pale bleak colour.

Many were shocked at the display of bare breasts, and kissing was commonly practised. Before this time Erasmus remarked upon this custom, and advised a friend to come to England in order to enjoy these salutations from the beautiful maids of this country. Some ladies strongly objected to this indiscriminating kissing.

There are many other articles of female attire which helped to make the dress complete. There were hoops "that hips and haunch do hide and heave aloft the gay hoist train," finely fringed aprons and jewels galore, scarfs and fans, amber bracelets, beads, plenty of lace and fragrant pomanders, a sort of perfumed paste rolled in a ball which was useful in attracting suitors and in keeping off the plague. Musk also pleased these ladies, and they often wore masks, made of velvet, and carried looking-glasses in their girdles, or in the centre of their fans, which were made of feathers inserted

into silver or ivory tubes. I had nearly forgotten to mention their gloves, which were like gauntlets, ornamented with gold thread and fringe.

Here is a picture of a lady attired in what was called a riding habit taken from William Goddard's *A Mastiff Whelp :*

" To see Morilla in her coach to ride,
With her long leck of hair upon one side ;
With hatt and feather worn in swagging guise :
With buttoned boddice, skirted doublet wise,
Unmaskt, and sit i' th' booth without a fanne :
Speake, could you judge her lesse than be some manne."

Morilla's side-lock of hair, commonly worn both by men and women, was called the French lock. A beau in *Rub and a Great Cast,* by Freeman, has a " long French locke," and this is alluded to in many other poems and epigrams.[1]

In such manner was a woman dressed in the glorious days of Queen Bess, who herself set the fashion of extraordinary extravagance, having some 3000 dresses, seeming to delight in every wayward fancy and to uphold the truth of the satirist that " a ship was sooner rigged than a woman." I have not mentioned many of the ladies' " mincing niceties," such as taffeta pipkins, durance petticoats and silver bodkins, their smocks, 3 li a piece, and much else ; but a woman's dress has many intricacies that are difficult for a man to describe ;

[1] Hall's *Satires,* iii, 7, *A Letting of Humour's Blood* (Epigram 27). Pyrott's *Springes for Woodcockes* (1613), " And on his shoulder wears a dangling locke."

yet I have written, perhaps, enough to disclose the Elizabethan extravagance in costume, as a warning to subsequent ages. However there were some men and women who were not carried away by this love of finery and ever-changing transformation. The country squires and their ladies, as far as the evidence afforded by their effigies on their tombs, were not so ridiculous, and Harrison says that the merchants did least alter their attire and therefore were most to be commended. Though their dress was very fine and costly, yet in form and colour it represented the ancient gravity belonging to citizens and burgesses. The younger sort of their wives, however, both in dress and costly house-keeping were always striving after the new fashions, as being women indeed, and therefore full of curiosity, and in far greater measure than amongst those of the higher calling in life.

XVIII

THE POOR. ROGUES AND VAGABONDS AND PUNISHMENTS

ENGLAND was called in Shakespearean times the paradise of married women, the purgatory of servants and the hell of horses. Certainly the ladies who gratified their love of dress sat at their doors in the City streets decked out in their fine clothes, and who received great honour at the banquets of the City Companies, did not trouble themselves with household drudgery, walked and rode to visit their friends, and enjoyed much liberty, had what is called in modern phraseology "a good time." I do not know why England should then have been a purgatory for servants, unless it be that the *nouveaux riches* are in the habit of treating their dependants with hautiness and arrogance. Bad roads, cumbersome, springless wagons, heavy coaches and the double burden of pinion riding, may have made a horse's life a weariness to him.

There is no doubt, however, that rogues and vagabonds, who greatly increased in number during

our period, experienced very hard times. This increase was due partly to the dissolution of the monasteries, but chiefly to economic reasons. The progress of sheep-farming in the time of the early Tudors, and consequently the decrease in agricultural employment, had driven the labourers from the village to the towns, where work could not be found for them. Scarcely a quarter of a century had elapsed since the destruction of the monasteries when Elizabeth came to the throne. The monks had been good landlords and had provided well for the labourers and tenants on their farms. Their departure caused a serious social revolution. When Harrison wrote in 1566, not sixty years had elapsed since beggars and vagrants began their trade ; and he says that there were in his time about 10,000 [1] tramps and rogues, who, following the example of the gypsies, had devised a language of their own called "canting," or "peddlar's French," composed partly of English words and partly of odd words of their own devising which no one could understand but themselves. He divided the poor into three classes, the impotent, those made poor by accident, and the thriftless, who became rogues and vagabonds. For the first two classes, the true Poor, whom Christ bids us feed, weekly collections were made throughout the land, and it was found necessary to establish by various Acts of Parlia-

[1] This estimate was too low. In 1569 a search was made, and no less than 13,000 were rounded up.

ment—of which there were four passed in Elizabeth's reign—a system of Poor relief. The only remedy they could devise to cure the vagrants was to whip them in the towns through which they wandered. In the record of our Berkshire town of Hungerford there are several items referring to these whippings: the instrument of torture, the whip, is still preserved, and it is also noticeable that the victims were subsequently given money to help them on their way to the next town where the process would be repeated. I notice also that the whip is not a very formidable instrument. The lashes are very thin, and I do not think they could hurt the victim very much. It must have been simple child's play to an Eton birching. Harrison has some very harsh words against the sin of covetous folk who grabbed land, and turned men out of their holdings for their own gain. "At whose hand shall the blood of these men be required?" he asks in scorn. The dispossessed either emigrate or join the ranks of the ever-increasing bands of wanderers. These beggars must have been a great nuisance, as they used to counterfeit sickness and make hideous sores upon their bodies, so as to excite the pity of the passers-by. Some, too, were very sturdy beggars, thieves, robbers, rufflers and a host of others whose names are a puzzle, e.g. Palliards, Fraters, Abrams, freshwater mariners or whipjacks, dummerers and others, both male and female.

These were guilty of all kinds of crime, and various punishments were inflicted, whipping, burning through the ears with a third-inch hot iron and in case of contumacy death. Amongst the tramps, who falsely pretended to be licensed to ply their calling, were cofiners, unlawful gamesters, physiognomists, palmists, fortune-tellers, fencers, players, minstrels, jugglers, pedlars, tinkers, pretended scholars at the Universities, shipmen and bearwards. These bear-leaders had been the cause of many children's deaths. Punishments, like sports, in the poet's time, were cruel. In the country we had our stocks. Shakespeare often alludes to them. Falstaff complains—

> " The knave constable had set me in the stocks."

In *All's Well* a victim is said to have been set in the stocks all night ; and other passages are doubtless familiar to you.

In one play someone says, " Fetch hither the stocks," showing that portable stocks were sometimes used. An accompaniment to the stocks was the whipping-post, which (as I have said) was in frequent use. Ducking-stools and branks were much in vogue for scolding women, terrible implement of torture which poor women had to endure who had dared to protest against the vagaries of drunken or faithless husbands, or to speak their minds to a local tyrant dressed in the apparel of a brief authority.

Hanging was the punishment for felony or treason. Torture was seldom used to extract confession. Murderers were hanged in chains, and a wilful murderer had his hands struck off before his execution, but England knew nothing of those terrible instruments of torment, the wheel and the bar, in Elizabethan times, though they were commonly used in other countries. Felony included many crimes, all of which I cannot mention. Some are remarkable, such as the stealing of hawks' eggs, taking horses into Scotland, conjuring, sorcery, witchcraft, prophesying on arms and badges, sweating coin, stealing, robbing, cutting purses, stealing deer by night, forging, etc. Poisoners were boiled to death in water or lead. Perjurers were burnt in the forehead with the letter P. Ears and hands were cut off for various crimes, heretics burnt, and unchaste women were ducked and had to do open penance dressed in a sheet in churches or market-places. Suicides were buried at the cross-roads with a stake driven through their bodies. Halifax had a peculiar law of its own. Felons were not hanged then, but beheaded by a curious form of primitive guillotine, which was worked by the townsfolk themselves, showing that they were all willing to see justice done. This was " Halifax Law." Mute felons were pressed to death by heavy weights, a terribly cruel death, which often was endured with much fortitude, so that the goods of the delinquent might pass to his relatives ; otherwise if he were condemned

these would have gone to the Crown. There was a curious survival of Benefit of Clergy whereby scholars turned felons were saved from death at the first offence, but were branded on the thumb.

Horrible murders were not very frequent, but there were many lesser crimes. Horse-stealing was common, and about three or four hundred rogues were hanged every year. The City of London devised many punishments for fraud and dishonesty, and it was not an uncommon sight to see a fraudulent baker drawn on a hurdle through the muddy streets and set in the pillory, where he was a target for stones and mud and filth thrown at him by the outraged citizens. Occasionally, too, a butcher would be seen riding on a horse with his face to the tail, and his bad meat in front of him on his way to the same unpleasant pillory.

In these ways did our Elizabethan ancestors endeavour to "make the punishment fit the crime," and according to their lights were not unsuccessful. Although the age was cruel there do not seem to have been any hideous torture-chambers in general use, as in foreign countries, and it was a felony on the part of a jailer to torture any prisoner in order to discover his accomplices. The rack was lurking at the Tower of London and was used in Shakespeare's time, when conspirators threatened the lives of sovereigns; but England knew not the terrors of the Inquisition, nor the cruel strokes of the whips which the Spaniards were bringing with

them in the galleons for the benefit of English backs.

I discovered in the British Museum some Armada ballads written by Thomas Deloney, a famous ballad-writer of his day, to whose verses I have already referred.[1] In one of these—"A new Ballet of the strange and more curious Whippes which the Spaniards had prepared to whippe and torment English men and women, which were found and taken at the overthrow of certain Spanish shippes in July last past 1588. To the tune of the Valiant Soldiour"—he exhibits a drawing of two very savage-looking whips with large ugly spiked balls on each lash, a very heavy one for men, and one not quite so ponderous intended for the backs of English women. The ballad begins:

"Ah, you that list to looke and see
What profite comes from Spayne,
And what the Pope and Spanyards both
Prepared for our gayne.

Then turn your eyes and bend your ears
And you shall heare and see
What courteous minds, what gentle harts
They bear to thee and mee.

For never was there horse nor mule
Nor dogge of currish kinde,
That ever had such whips devised
By any savage mind."

[1] He had a quarrel with Kemp, one of Shakespeare's players, who supposed himself maligned in one of his productions.

The men's whips were of strings with "wyerie knots like rowels they did frame which pluckt the sinewes from the bone, pricked and pearced each tender vein, left each crooked ribbe bear," and did various other damage. The women's whips were almost as destructive. The ballad then alludes to the cruelty of the Spaniards in India, to the fate of the British Queen Boadicea; and then, by an ingenious confusion between the Romans and the Papists, asks, "If these ruffling mates of Rome did princes thus torment, think you the Romish Spaniards now would not shewe their disent?" The poem concludes with a description of the rejoicings of Spaniards in anticipation of their victory:

"How did they late in Rome rejoyce,
For Italy and Spayne,
What ringing and what Bonfires,
What masses sung amaine.

What printed Bookes were sent about,
As fitted their desires,
How England was by Spanyards woone,
And London set on fire.

Be these the men that are so mild,
Who some so holie call?
The Lord defend our noble Queene
And countrye from them all.

Finis, T.D.

Imprinted at London by Thomas Orwin and Thomas Gubbin, and are solde in Paternoster Row over against the Blacke Raven, 1588."

XIX

SUPERSTITION, ALCHEMY, ASTROLOGY

IN Shakespeare's time ignorance and superstition held relentless sway over the popular mind. The woods were the haunts of fairies. Our modern enlightenment has driven away these gentle creatures from their accustomed playgrounds. What are fairy rings but the marks of the footsteps of these pretty little elves as they danced round in their mystic circle? Not long ago they lived in Ireland and may still do so unless the Sein Fieners have killed them; and old people would not go out of doors in the evenings, lest they should disturb the fairy revels. They were very popular in the poet's time, and his audience would believe that it was not all fancy when they heard Puck say:

"How now, spirit, whither wander you?"

and the Fairy answered:

"Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through briar,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire.

I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green:
And cowslips to all her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see,
There be rubies, fairy favours,
In these freckles live their savours;
I must go suck some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl on every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits, I'll be gone;
Our queen and all our elves come here anon."

Goblins and will-o'-the-wisps haunted the fields, and ghosts lurked in the churchyards under the yew-trees.

Witches and witchcraft were fully believed in both by the learned and unlearned. In Elizabeth's time the persecution was not so fierce as in that of her successor, and though some were executed witches were usually placed in the pillory or ducking stool, or tested by a peculiar system of water ordeal, and not condemned to death as they were later on. When the witch was thrown into a river, if she sank she was innocent, if she floated she was guilty. It is not stated whether, being proved innocent, she was ever rescued from the water. Even prominent and learned men believed in it. Lord Bacon, the greatest scientist of the day, prescribed "henbane, hemlock, mandrake, moonshade, tobacco, opium, and other soporiferous medicines," as ingredients for a witch's ointment; Sir Walter Raleigh was a firm believer in witchcraft, and Sir Matthew Hale,

the judge, shared the same belief. On the accession of the Queen, Bishop Jewell preached a sermon against sorcery, and twenty years later there was a mild form of witch persecution. That was partly in consequence of a waxen image of the Queen being discovered in Lincoln's Inn Fields. This was a terrible practice of witchcraft. If you were a dealer in the black art, and you bore a grudge against any one, you would make a figure in wax of your victim, and occasionally torture it by pricking it with a pin or a bodkin, and wherever your victim happened to be, he, or she, would feel the pain in that part of the body so punctured. You had only to pierce the region of the heart, or burn the figure in the fire, and your victim would die. The discovery of this waxen image of the Queen seemed to suggest that some hateful witch had designs upon her life. It appears that the Queen had toothache, caused doubtless by her fondness for sugar which had made her teeth very black, and she thought that it was the result of a witch's spell. Dr. Dee, the famous astrologer, who on the coronation of the Queen had foretold her future by consulting the stars, was consulted in haste, and he pretended that he was able to defeat the designs of such evil-disposed persons, and prevent his royal mistress feeling any of the pains which might be inflicted on her effigy. We shall return to Dr. Dee's exploits later on.

In Lancashire witchcraft found a congenial home ;

and even the greatest men were not exempt from its evil influences. Edward, Earl of Derby (1510–1572), entertained a conjurer in his house, one Mumford who (according to Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork) "lately cast out devils." Ferdinando, Earl of Derby, in 1594 was supposed to have been killed by witchcraft, and he believed it himself. There is a curious document entitled, "A true reporte of such reasons and conjectures as cause verie many and the same also verie learned men to suppose his Hon. to be witched." A Mr. Halsall found an image of wax in the Earl's bedchamber, and threw it into the fire, thinking to deliver his friend from the power of some witch; but unhappily the Earl sickened and died as the wax melted. Some witches were charged and examined and the test was applied as to whether they could repeat the Lord's Prayer and one of them could not say "forgive us our trespasses."

In 1597 Alice Brerley, of Casleton, was pardoned, though she had been condemned to death for killing two men by spells. Nicholas Starkie had two young children who were believed to be possessed by the devil. Miss E. M. Platt, who wrote a chapter on Lancashire Witches for my book on Lancashire, suggests that they only had fits.[1] Hartley, a cunning conjurer, was called in, and by means of a magic circle and certain charms gave some relief;

[1] *Memorials of Old Lancashire*, edited by Colonel Fishwick and Mr. Ditchfield, Vol. I, p. 225.

but he outstayed his welcome and was driven from the house. Before he left he caused five females to be possessed, and it was believed that he breathed the devil into any one whom he kissed. Dr. Dee was consulted, but refused to act, recommending the calling in of "some godlye preacher" who prayed with the victims and fasted. Hartley was sentenced to death, and some of the "godlye preachers" were implicated in the charge of familiarity with the black art, and one was deposed from his living.

Witches were often deemed very useful folk. They were consulted by fair maidens and shy youths about love affairs, and provided love philtres or potent herbs for compelling affection. They healed cattle. A gentleman found many horses in his stables bewitched. They were "sick, crying, grinning and starting." He consulted a witch who advised him to burn a sick horse alive. The rest immediately recovered. Another man did the same with the sheep, and was told to roast the heart of the sheep he burnt on a spit. With the advent of James of Scotland witch-hunting began with renewed vigour. He was crazed with the witch-mania of Scotland, and shared his madness with John Knox. His first Parliament enacted new laws for the punishment of witches. Many childish old women were hunted down, the victims of malice, or because they were old and ill-favoured, and many of them certainly believed in their powers, and in

their familiars, their black dogs or their goblins called "Tibb."

There was a very famous case in Lancashire, in the barren wilds of Pendle Forest in 1612, where lived two old women nicknamed "Old Demdike" and "Old Chattox." They made a good living out of their magical art. But two of a trade seldom agree, and the old women quarrelled as to who had the greater powers. They could cast spells on and kill children, friends and cattle, and cause the loss of the goods of those who offended them. They and many others used to meet at Malkin Tower to concoct their villainies and celebrate their magic craft. They were brought before the justices, seventeen witches and three wizards, and many were condemned to death. The whole account of the proceedings was written by Potts, clerk of the court, and his account called the "Discoverie of Witches" has been published in the Cheetham Society's transactions. It throws considerable light upon the ways of witches, but it is too long to be here recorded. In spite of persecution witchcraft flourished vigorously in the northern counties, and there were many victims who paid the extreme penalty of the law.

Shakespeare in this, as in other matters, reflects the spirit and beliefs of his age. There are constant allusions to witchcraft in the plays. His witches are "foul and ugly" and "foul wrinkled." The witches play a prominent part in *Macbeth* and

brew most pestilential ingredients in their cauldron. Poor Jeanne d'Arc, *La Pucelle*, was accused of witchcraft, and Talbot says to her in 1 *Henry VI*,

> " Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch,"

alluding to the method of saving oneself from her evil spells. If you could draw the blood of a witch by scratching her, she could not harm you—a remedy that was practised by a young man so late as forty years ago. There are many other allusions in the plays to witchcraft. In the poet's time there was the celebrated Warboy's case, and Reginald Scot's work, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, was published in 1579.

Cognate with popular superstition was the study of Alchemy. In *Timon of Athens* there is the line :

> " Hence ! You are an alchemist, make gold of that,"

alluding to the constant search for the philosophers' stone, by which base metals could be turned into gold. It also cured all manner of human ills, a precious medicine, the Elixir Vitæ, which could prolong life indefinitely and make old men young again. Shakespeare's allusions to the art are metaphorical. Perhaps he feared Ben Jonson's warning concerning alchemy :

> " You may come to end
> The remnant of your days in loathsome prison
> By speaking of it."

His play, *The Alchemist*, pours scorn on the art. Therein we make the acquaintance of Subtle, a charlatan and pretended seeker after the philosophers' stone, and Dol Common, his accomplice. Under the pretence of practising alchemy and soothsaying they attracted a great number of dupes. To Abel Drugger he proclaims :

> " The thumb, in chiromancy, we give Venus ;
> The forefinger, to Jove ; the midst, to Saturn ;
> The ring, to Sol ; the least, to Mercury,
> Who was the lord of life, Sir, of his horoscope,
> His house of life being Libra ; which fore-show'd,
> He shall be a merchant, and should trade with balance."

But this is astrology. Abel Drugger was told on the east side of his shop to write :

> " Mathlori, Turmiel and Baraborat ;
> Upon the north part, Rael, Velel, Thiel.
> They are the names of those mercurial spirits
> That do fright flies from boxes."

Sir Epicure Mammon is Subtle's great victim for whom he prepared " the magisterium, our great work, the stone " ; and who is going about making many rich :

> " Offering citizens' wives pomander-bracelets
> As his preservative, made of the elixir,
> Searching the spital to make old bawds young,
> And the highways, for beggars to make rich."

He will say to all his friends " Be rich," change all that is metal in his house to gold, buy tin and lead and copper, purchase Devonshire and Cornwall.

> " He that has once the flower of the sun,
> The perfect ruby, which we call elixir,
> Not only can do that, but, by its virtue,
> Can confer honour, love, respect, long life :
> Give safety, valour, yea, and victory,
> To whom he will. In eight-and-twenty days
> I'll make an old man of fourscore a child."

Surly, his servant, suggests that he is that already, but Mammon explains that his years shall be restored and that he shall be like an eagle, and get sons and daughters, young giants, as the old philosophers, the ancient patriarchs before the flood, had done. Such, and much more, had I space to set them down, were some of the dreams of the searchers of the philosophers' stone, who toiled day and night, poring over strange books and mystic lore, mixing curious and weird ingredients, to obtain that wonderful elixir that should make man immortal. A learned divine, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, resigned his chair to study alchemy. Paracelsus, a good scientist, but a drunken charlatan, had many followers.

And then, there was Dr. Dee, whose slight acquaintance we have made, noted alchemist and astrologer, a learned and prolific author, who was warden of the collegiate church of Manchester. Queen Elizabeth was a firm believer in his astrological powers. He, however, disclaimed all dealings with the " black art " in his petition to her successor, James, which was couched in these words :

"It has been affirmed that your majesty's suppliant was the conjurer belonging to the most honourable privy council of your majesty's predecessor, of famous memory, Queen Elizabeth; and that he is, or hath been, a caller or invocator of devils, or damned spirits; these slanders, which have tended to his utter undoing, can no longer be endured; and if on trial he is found guilty of the offence imputed to him, he offers himself willingly to the punishment of death; yea, either to be stoned to death, or to be buried quick, or to be burned unmercifully."

In spite of his assertions Dr. Dee certainly dabbled in the "black art," and was the companion and friend of Edward Kelly, a notorious necromancer, who for his sins had his ears cut off at Lancaster. Kelly used to exhume and consult the dead. In the darkness of night he and his companions entered churchyards, dug up the bodies of men recently buried, and caused them to utter predictions concerning the fate of the living. Dr. Dee's friendship with Kelly was suspicious. He was obliged to resign his clerical office, and wandered over Europe with Kelly, as an honoured guest in the courts of many sovereigns. The Emperor Rodolph, Stephen, King of Poland, and other royal personages, welcomed the renowned astrologers who could read the stars, had discovered the philosophers' stone in the form of a powder which changed the bottom of a warming-pan into pure silver, simply by warming it at the fire, the elixir that rendered men

immortal, and made the precious metals so plentiful that children played at quoits with golden rings. No wonder they were so welcome. They were acquainted with the Rosicrucian philosophy, could hold correspondence with the spirits of the elements, imprison a spirit in a mirror, ring, or stone, and compel it to answer questions. Dr. Dee's mirror, which worked such miracles, found in his study at his death in 1608, is now in the British Museum. He died in poverty and great misery, as most of these professors of black magic did, and the philosophers' stone never brought them riches.

The superstition of the age manifested itself in the portents of the stars and astrology. Every one was born under a lucky or unlucky star. Hall, in his Satires, scoffs at judicial astrology which professed to foretell human affairs. He wrote that it was the daughter of Egyptian midwives, and that having been nursed by superstition she assumed the garb of science.

> "That now who pares his nails or libs his swine,
> But he must first take counsel of the Signs."

Men had their horoscopes cast by astrologers, and firmly believed in what the stars foretold. Of this popular belief Hall wrote :

> "His fear or hope, for plentie or for lack,
> Hangs all upon his New Year's Almanack.
> If chance once in the spring his head should ake,
> It was foretold—'thus says mine Almanack.'"

A large number of pamphlets was published, called *Prognostications*, and these proved how eagerly the people sought to read the future by the help of the stars. Richard Harvey, a learned astrologer and astronomer of Cambridge, published in 1582 a treatise called *Astrological Discourse*, predicting the portentous conjunction of the primary planets, Saturn and Jupiter, which was to happen in the following year, prophesying many evils that would befall the nation. Every one became alarmed. But the year passed quietly and no great calamity happened; the fears of the people subsided, and Nashe wrote a parody upon Harvey's work, entitled, *A Wonderful, Strange and Miraculous Astrologicall Prognostication*, ridiculing the whole affair, and Elderton, a ballad-maker, and Tarleton, the comedian, joined in the laugh. Nashe poured scorn on Gabriel Harvey, Richard's brother, and wrote: "The best wit-craft I can turn him too, to get 3^{d} a week, is to write Prognostigations and Almanacks, and that alone must be his best philosophers' stone till his last destiny."

Shakespeare reflects the current beliefs of his time by many astrological allusions. King Richard in his conversation with the widowed queen declaims:

> "Be opposite all planets of good luck
> To my proceeding,"[1]

[1] *Richard III*, Act IV, scene 4.

and in the same scene there is the line :

" At their birth good stars were opposite."

In *Julius Cæsar* belief in astrology is deprecated in the lines :

" The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings." [1]

And yet in *King Lear* we read, " The stars above us govern our conditions." But this is answered by Edmund, who contends :

" This is the excellent foppery of the world that, when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars ; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence ; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. '[2] This was doubtless the poet's own belief, but he often makes his characters utter the popular fallacies. He makes one speak of " an auspicious star." Another says :

" There was a star danc'd, and under that I was born."

Another was " born under a charitable star," and there is that amusing conversation between Sir

[1] *Julius Cæsar*, Act I, scene 2.
[2] *Lear*, Act I, scene 2.

Andrew Ague-cheek and Sir Toby Belch as to whether Leo or Taurus governs "the sides and heart" or the "legs and thighs," that is what is "nocturnal and bestial."

But we have had sufficient of astrological jargon. Astrology led the way to the science astronomy, and the triumph of the Copernican system destroyed such "fond things vainly invented." And as astrology led to a true knowledge of the stars and the motions of the heavenly bodies, so alchemy was the father of chemistry which made some progress during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Not that the conclusions of Copernicus had received universal acceptance in the England of Shakespeare. The earth was still commonly believed to be the centre of the universe, and even Bacon accepted that theory. It is a proof of the deep insight of our poet into nature to observe how nearly he approached to the truth with regard to the "worlds on worlds that compose one universe," when he wrote :

> "The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
> Observe degree, priority, and place,
> Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
> Office, and custom, in all line of order :
> And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
> In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd
> Amidst the other."[1]

[1] *Troilus*, Act I, scene 3.

XX

CONCLUSION

THERE is much else that might be added about the special features of the time when our poet lived. We might follow the young Elizabethan from his cradle to his grave and note the customs that awaited him at his christening, his wedding and his funeral. We might devote sections to the artists, the musicians, the sculptors, the doctors and lawyers. There were plenty of abuses. We have listened to some of the plaints of Philip Stubbes—the whole would fill a volume, and Churchyard's *Challenge* and his *Mirror and Manners of Men* supply us with many other strictures that would "point a moral and adorn a tale." Bishop Babington's godly admonitions and crowds of jesting satirists record or scoff at the absurdities and vices of the times. But in spite of all the critics it is a true instinct that leads us to look back on those days as the most vivid, changeful and momentous in our history, unless we regard the present thrilling times in which we are now living. It was the youth of modern England, possessing all the

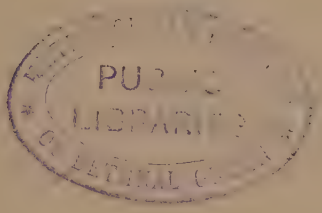
follies and infirmities as well as the manly qualities of youth, filled with an uplifting sense of freedom and of power.

Such, in very brief, was the England Shakespeare knew, of which he formed so vital and uplifting a part. The French critic, M. Taine, in praising our poet said that all came from within, from his soul and his genius, his powerful imagination. He thought that circumstances and the externals contributed but slightly to his development. "He was intimately bound up with his age; that is, he knew by experience the manners of the country, court and town. He had visited the heights, the depths and the middle ranks of mankind, but there was nothing there. In all other respects his life was commonplace; its irregularities, troubles, passions, successes, were on the whole such as we meet with everywhere else." M. Taine, therefore, considered that the age and the England of that age had little to do with the great poet's works, and in that opinion I venture to think he erred. We accept with readiness the pronouncement that Shakespeare "was not of an age, but for all time." We know that is true when we realise the appeal he makes to every age, to every country that calls itself civilised. No time dims the brilliancy of his language, the sublimity of his thoughts, the grandeur of his conceptions. Nevertheless primarily and essentially he belonged to the age in which he lived, that age of which Ben Jonson declared he

was " the soul," that age which in all the course of English history was peculiar to itself. We have tried to tell its strange characteristics, its love of freedom, its extravagances, its follies ; but in spite of these it was a Great Age, a time when poetry cast off its shackles and became new-born, when literature gave birth to such masterpieces as she had never produced before, a time when men's eyes were opened to see the glories of the world, and when the minds of Englishmen were no longer cramped and confined within their country's borders. It was an age when England, no longer torn by Civil War and feudal tyranny, first felt her power and produced great statesmen like Burleigh, great divines like Hooker, navigators, heroes, conquerors and a Queen who loved her country as her life, and whose strong Tudor hand and wise and crafty brain helped to steer the ship of state amidst many dangerous rocks.

In all this Shakespeare played his part, reflecting the mind and spirit of his time, and is full of human sympathy and fellowship for mankind, its foibles, its passions, its joys and sorrows. I have tried to place the poet in his accustomed surroundings, to depict the England that he knew, to describe the abundant life that throbbed in London streets, in port and palace, in cot and castle. It is a life so varied, so full of divers details, that I may have omitted some " scenes from this eventful history " which ought to have been shown. But it is time

for the curtain to fall. The actors have fretted their little hour upon the stage, played their part and said their say. The audience is, perhaps, a little weary and eager to pass on from Bankside and Paris gardens to fresh fields and pastures new. But ere we draw the curtain, let us unite in paying our reverent homage to the great poet's memory, and testify our loyal affection for him, which will last as long as England lives and preserves that breed of men whom Shakespeare was delighted to call his friends.



INDEX

Abbeys, the effects of dissolution of, 281.
Abergavenny, Lord, his players, 238.
Achely, Thomas, 230.
Acts of Parliament for relief of poor, 281.
Agincourt, battle of, 7.
Agriculture, changes in, 26, 203.
— and Trade, 202–21.
Akeman Street, 154.
Albion's England, 230.
Alchemist, the, 31, 285.
Alchemy, 288–301.
Aldermaston Court, 179.
Alderminster, 148.
Ales, church, 267.
Alsatia, 93, 99.
Ambassadors, visits of, 74, 138, 254.
America and Shakespeare, 3.
Animals kept in the Tower, 96.
Antwerp, 220.
Arcadia, 228.
Archery, 257–9.
Architects of this period, 167.
Architecture, Tudor, 167–82.
— of Divinity School, Oxford, 159.
Arden, Mary, 118.
Arden, Robert, 126.
Arden family, 50, 118, 132.
Arden, forest of, 111.
Armada, the, 170, 183–99.
Armada ballads, 193–200, 286.
Armour, 191.
Army of England, 190–3.
Array, commissioners of, 190.
Arundel House, 91.
Arundel, Lord, his players, 238.
Ascham, R., 18, 257.
Astrea, Hymns of, 230.
Astrology, 288–301.
Astronomy, 301.
Astrophel and Stella, 228.
Aubrey, 147.
Audley, Sir T., 106.
Audley End, 171–2.
Augustine Friars, 105.
Austria, Archduke Ferdinand of, 68.
Austria, Archduke Charles of, 68.
Autolycus and his wares, 269.
Avon river, 118, 121, 147.

B

Bacon, Lord, 19, 90, 107, 179, 230, 289.
Bacon, Nicholas, 40, 90.
Ballads, 193–200, 286.
Bankside, 241.
Barnaby Rich, 36.
Barnard, Lady, 124.
Barnard's Castle, 94.
Bartholomew Fair, 214, 217
Bartholomew Fair, Jonson's play, 216.
Barton-on-the-Heath, 135, 263
Bear-baiting, 253.
Beards, 275.
Beaumont, Francis, dramatist, 101, 248.
Berners, Dame Juliana, 251.
Beza, Theodore, poem by, 199.
Bible, Shakespeare's knowledge of, 54.

Bidford, crab-tree at, 136.
Billiards, 265.
Birthplace, the poet's, 115.
Bishops, burned at Oxford, 157.
Bishops, Marian, 40.
Bishopsgate Street, 104.
Blackfriars, 93.
Blackfriars Theatre, 241.
Boar's Head, East Cheap, 103.
Bobadill in *Every Man in His Humour*, 20, 35.
Bocardo prison in Oxford, 157.
Boonen, W., introduction of coaches, 138.
Boorde, Andrew, 172.
Bosworth, battle of, 114.
Bowling, 265.
Bows, disuse of, 258.
Boys' games, 266.
Brancks, 283.
Brandl, Professor, 1.
Brawn, 151.
Bridewell Palace, 93.
Bridge, London, 95.
Bridge at Stratford, 118.
Bridge Town, 147.
Bridges, 139.
Bristol, Shakespeare at, 110.
Broughton Castle, 173.
Brownists, the, 52.
Buckingham, Duke of, 91.
Bucklersbury, 102.
Bull-baiting, 253.
Burbage family, 106, 240.
Burbage, James, 240.
Burleigh, Lord, 16, 40, 72.
Busino, 137.

C

Camden, 36, 87, 143.
Carpets, 179.
Cartwright, T., and the Puritans, 48.
Castle Comb, Wilts, 31.
Castles, 180.
Castleton, witch at, 291.
Catechism, the poet's knowledge of, 52.
Cathedral, St. Paul's, 99.
Cathedrals, condition of the, 59.
Cattle in England, 149–51.
Cervantes, Miguel de, 3.
Chapman, George, 247.
Charlecote Park, 114, 132.
Charterhouse, the, 99.
Chaucer, 222.
Cheapside, 101.
Chess, 265.
Chester plays, 233–5.
— races, 257.
Chipping Norton, 153.
Christmas holidays, 266.
Christ's Hospital, 98.
— Church Priory, 105.
Church of England, 38–64.
— — despoiled, 41.
— — under James I., 54, 55.
— at Stratford, 121.
— ales, 267.
Churchyard, Thomas, 224, 302.
Clergy plundered, 42.
— portrait of, 58.
Clifford Chambers, 135.
Cloaks, 274.
Clopton, Sir Hugh, 118, 130.
Clopton, Sir John, 120, 129.
Clopton House, 129.
Cloth Fair, 215.
Clothiers of England, 202.
Coaches, 137, 138.
Cock-fighting, 263.
Coinage, 219.
Cokaine, Sir Thomas, on Hunting, 251.
Colleges at Oxford, 161.
Combe, William, 131.
Combe, John de, 131.
Companies of London, City, 88, 220, 259.
— Trading, 221.
— of Players, 238.
Compton, Long, 151.
Contarini, Venetian Ambassador, 138.
Continuity of history, 71.
Costume, Elizabethan, 271–9.
Costume of the clergy, 58.
Cottages, 181.
Country Gentleman, The, 112.

Court, the, 65–85.
Coventry, Play at, 84.
— Shakespeare at, 110.
Cranmer, Archbishop, 157, 164.
Creighton, Bishop, quoted, 61.
Crime in England, 283.
Crosby Hall, 22, 104.
Cross, the High, Stratford, 118.
Crown Inn, Oxford, 147.
Curtain Theatre, 106.

D

Damon and Pytheas, 245.
Dancing, 263.
Daniel, Samuel, 230.
Darrell, Wild, his accounts, 32, 73.
Davenant, Mrs., 147, 158.
Davenant, Sir W., 147.
Davis, John, 185.
Davis, John, Sir, 230, 264.
Dee, Dr., 154, 290, 292, 296–8.
Dekker, Thomas, on St. Paul's Cathedral, 100.
Dekker, Thomas, on Royal Exchange, 103.
Dekker, Thomas, on dress, 271, 273.
Dekker's *Guls Horne Book*, 246.
Deloney, T., ballads by, 193–8, 286.
Derby, Earl of, 291.
Devereux, Penelope, 73.
Devereux, Robert, Earl of Essex, 72.
Devil's Ditch, 154.
Diaz, Bartholomew, 185.
Discipline of the clergy, 46, 61–3.
— — — laity, 61–3.
Discoveries of Witchcraft, The, 294.
Divinity School, Oxford, 159.
Donne, Dr., 231.
Donnington Castle, 180.
Douay, seminary priests from, 49, 159.
Doublets, changes in fashion of, 272, 275.
Drake, Sir F., 185, 187, 189.
Drayton, 15, 14, 229.
Drunkenness, 143, 218.
Ducking-stools, 283.
Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 17, 43, 92, 180, 237.
Duels, 29.
Durham House, 91.
Dyer, Sir Edward, 230.

E

East Cheap, 103, 108.
East India Company, 221.
Eastland Company, 221.
Ecclesiastical Polity, The, 231.
Edge Hills, the, 125.
Edwards, Richard, 245.
Elixir Vitæ, 294–6.
Elizabeth, Queen, 12, 13, 40, 66, 68, 70, 154, 158, 184, 196–9, 230, 237, 250, 254, 290.
Elizabeth, the Princess, 81, 107.
Eltington, 148.
Elvetham, 260.
Ely Place, 108.
England, Shakespeare's description of, 5–8.
— her rise to power, 12.
— state of, 62, 270.
Enstone, Hoar stone at, 154.
Erasmus, 160.
Essays and Characters, 204.
Essex House, 92.
Essex, Robert Devereux, Earl of, 72, 91.
Euphuism, 226–8.
Exchange, the Royal, 103.

F

Fairie Queen, 13, 228.
Fairies, 281.
Fairs and markets, 206–9.
Falstaff, 30, 100, 104, 140.
Farmer, an Elizabethan, 204–6
Farmer's house, a, 128.
Farthingales, 275.
Fashions, 272.

Feldon country, the, 125.
Felony, 284.
Fencing, 29.
Feudalism, decay of, 17, 170.
Fig for the Spaniards, a, 200.
Finsbury Fields, 106, 241, 258.
Fitzgeoffry, Charles, 230.
Flemish workmen, 170, 176.
Fletcher Lawrence, 97.
Fletcher, John, 97, 248.
Flowers of Shakespeare, 117.
Football, 260–3.
Ford, John, dramatist, 249.
Foreign appreciation of Shakespeare, 1–5.
Foreign travel, 18.
— merchants, 103, 210.
— reformers, 39, 47.
Forks, use of, 76.
Fotheringhay Castle, 180.

G

Games, unlawful, 32.
Gammer Gurton's Needle, 226.
Garden, Gray's Inn, 107.
Gascoigne, George, 233.
Gaunt, John of, 6.
German aggression, 94.
German workmen imported, 170, 176.
Germany and Shakespeare, 2.
Gilberts of Devon, 185.
Glasshouse Yard, 93.
Gloucester, plays at, 239.
Goats, 151.
Goldsmiths' Row, 101.
Googe Barnebe, 224.
Gordoduc, 225, 238.
Gower, tomb of, 97.
Grace before meals, 63.
Grammar School at Stratford, 118.
— — masters of, 120.
Gray's Inn, 107.
Greene, Robert, his Play *Friar Bacon*, 163, 246.
Greenwich Palace, 76, 254.
Grendon-Underwood, 165.
Gresham, Sir T., 23, 103, 104.
Grime's Dyke, 154.
Groundlings, 241, 243.
Guild of the Holy Cross, 118–20.
Guildhall, 102.
Guilds perform plays, 234.

H

Hair, false, 276.
Hakluyt, R., 186, 231.
Halford, 148.
Halifax Law, 284.
Hall, Dr., 122.
Hall, Hubert, F.S.A., 15, 23, 73.
Hall, Joseph, Bishop, 231, 246, 298.
Halliwell-Phillips, 115, 120.
Halls at Oxford, 164.
Hanging, 284.
Hanse merchants, 94, 221.
Hardwick Hall, 179.
Hare-hunting, 250.
Harrison's *Description of England*, 18, 23, 44, 47, 55, 128, 140, 149, 159, 183, 191, 203, 281.
Harvard, John, 3.
Harvard House, 4.
Harvest Home, 267.
Harvey, Richard, 299.
Harvey, Gabriel, 299.
Hathaway, Ann, 124, 134.
Hats, 274.
Hatton, Christopher, Chancellor, 43, 108.
Hawking, 255.
Hawkins, Sir John, 185.
Head-dresses, 275, 276.
Henry VII, tomb of, 169.
Henry VIII, 38, 99, 169, 185.
Hentzner, 34, 77, 156, 163, 215, 252, 255.
Heraldry, 178.
Heresbach, 225.
Heywood, John, 238, 255.
Historical plays, the value of, 115.
Hoby, Thomas, 19.
Home of Shakespeare, the, 110–24.
Hooker, Richard, 231.

Hoops for ladies, 277.
Hop-growing, 203.
Horses, 150, 253.
Hounds, the cry of, 111–12.
Howard, Lord, 185.
Howard, Henry, Earl of Dorset, 233.
Hudson, 230.
Hugo, Victor, 2.
Hungerford, 282.
Hunsdon's company of actors, Lord, 110.
Hunting, 75, 111, 250.
Hunting, books on, 251.

I

Il Schifanoya, 74.
Immortality of the Soul, 230.
Inns, 140–5.
Inquisition, 286.
Interludes, 238.
Ireland Yard, 93.
Irving, Washington, 136.
Italian manners denounced, 18, 203.
— fencing, 29.
— workmen imported, 169.

J

Jack of Newbury, 202.
James I, 36, 54, 82, 96, 144, 292.
Jansen, Bernard, architect, 172.
Jeanne d'Arc, 294.
Jenkes, Rowland, bookseller, 158.
Jennet of Spain, 151.
Jesus College, Oxford, 158.
Jewell, Bishop, 290.
Johnson, Gerard, tomb-maker, 122.
Jonson, Ben, 30, 34, 56, 120, 241, 247–8, 294.

K

Kelly, Edward, necromancer, 297.
Kemp, an actor, 144.
Kenilworth Castle, 180, 237, 250.
Kissing, 277.
Kit Sly, 135.
Knolles, Francis, 73.
Knolles, Lettice, 73.
Knowle, 176.
Kydd, dramatist, 246.

L

Ladies' Costume, 275–9.
Lambeth Palace, 88, 89.
Lancashire, witchcraft in, 290–2.
Lawlessness in England, 28.
Lepanto, battle of, 71, 85.
Literature, Elizabethan, 222–32.
Lodge, dramatist, 247.
London, 74, 86–109.
— Bridge, 95.
— City Companies of, 88, 220, 259.
— jails, 109.
— scenes, 108, 109.
— Shakespeare's journey to, 146–66.
— stone, 104.
Lords-Lieutenants appointed, 190.
Lucy, Sir T., 50, 114, 132.
Luddington, 136.
Ludi or court spectacles, 237.
Lyly, John, 226–7.

M

Magnetic Lady, the, 56.
Mansions and manor-houses, 167–82.
Mariners of England, 9, 186, 220–1.
Markets and fairs, 206–19.
Markham, Gervase, 112, 251.
Markham, John, 230.
Marlowe, Christopher, 246.
Mary Queen of Scots, 67, 137, 180, 188, 276.
Mary Tudor, queen, 39, 60, 236.

Masques, 81, 107.
Massinger, Philip, 97, 144, 249.
May Day, 267.
May Fair, 217.
Mercers' Company, 102, 236.
Merchant Trading Companies, 221.
— Adventurers, 221.
Merchants, City, 21–5.
Mermaid Inn, 101, 248.
Middleton, Charles, 230.
Milkmaids, 154–6.
Miracle plays, 233–5.
Montmorenci, Duc de, 75.
Monuments at Stratford, 122, 130.
Moralities, 235.
Moryson, Fynes, on inns, 141–3
Mount Tabor, 238.

N

Nash, dramatist, 246.
Naval supremacy of England, 71, 185.
Navy of England, 183–9.
New Place, Stratford, 120–1.
Newgate, 98.
Nonsuch House, 95.
North Moreton, Berks, football at, 260.
Norwich, pageant at, 237.

O

Orchestra, 230.
Order of the Garter, 83.
Overbury, Sir Thomas, 126, 155.
Oxen, 150.
Oxford, 110, 156, 159–63.
Oxford, Lord, his players, 238.

P

Pageants, 74, 85, 236.
Palaces, royal, 84.
Paracelsus, 296.
Paris gardens, 97, 254.
Parish Clerk, the, 57.
Parker, Archbishop, 16, 39.
Paternoster Row, 101.
Patriotism of Shakespeare, 3–8.
Paul's Walk, 100.
Peele, George, 245, 246.
Pendle witches, 293.
Perjurers, punishment of, 284.
Philip II of Spain, 65, 187.
Philosophers' stone, 294–6.
Pilgrim's Progress, the, 210.
Pindar, Sir Paul, 22, 104.
Playhouse, 97.
Playhouse Yard, 93, 241.
Players, companies of, 238.
Plays and Players, 233–49.
Plays, Miracle, 233–5.
Plots and conspiracies, 29, 68.
Plough Monday, 267.
Poaching, 114, 132.
Pomanders, 277.
Poor, the, 280.
Portuguese navigators, 186.
Prayer Books of Edward VI, 39, 45.
Pressing to death, 284.
Prisoners, punishment of, 284.
Prisoners in Newgate, 109.
Prognostications, 299.
Progresses, royal, 84, 137.
Prophesyings, 46.
Protection, 219.
Psalms, old version of the, 63.
Puritan mode of singing, 51.
Puritans, 47–49, 249, 253, 257.
Purveyance, 213.

Q

Queen Henrietta Maria at New Place, 121.
Quiney, the Vintner, 121.
Quintain, 262.

R

Racing, 257.
Raleigh, Sir Walter, 91, 180, 185, 231, 289.
Ralph Roister Doister, 226.
Rapier, use of, 29, 275.
Reading, miracle plays at, 233.

Recusants, 50, 132.
Reformation, the, 38, 41.
Religion, 38–64.
— Shakespeare's views on, 50.
Renaissance, the, 168–70.
Reverence, Shakespeare's, 51.
Rich, Lord, 73.
Riots in London, 28.
Roads and travellers, 137–45.
— from Stratford to London, 146.
Robsart, Amy, 158.
Rockland, inn-keeper at, 145.
Rogues and vagabonds, 280–7.
Rokewood, Ambrose, 131.
Rollright stones, 151.
Roman Catholics, 39, 49.
Rother market, 118.
Rowington, 135.
Rowley, dramatist, 247.
Royal State of Queen Elizabeth, 75, 77–80.
Ruffs, 273, 275.
Russia Company, 221.

S

Sackville, Thomas, Earl of Dorset, 225.
Sacrilege, History of, 43.
Saint George, 8.
— Helen's, Bishopsgate, 104.
— James's Fair, 217.
— Katherine's Hospital, 96.
— Leonard's, Shoreditch, 106.
— Martin's le Grand, 99.
— Mary Aldermanbury, 102.
— Mary Ouverie, 97.
— Olave's Church, Tooley Street, 96.
— Paul's Cathedral, 99.
Saviolo, professor of fencing, 29.
Savoy Palace, 91.
Scotland, 67, 69.
Shakespeare, Edmund, 97.
Shakespeare, Home of, 110–24.
Shakespeare, John, 115, 116, 180.
Shakespeare, Susannah, 124.
Shakespeare Hall, 135.
Shakespeare's plays and poetry, 251.
Shakespeare's knowledge of sport, 250.
Sheep, 149, 202.
Sheep-market, 149.
Shepherd, the, 26–8.
Shepherd's Calendar, 228.
Sherborne Castle, 180.
Ships of the navy, 183.
Shipston-on-Stour, 149.
Shirley, James, dramatist, 249.
Shirleys of Eltington, 148.
Shoreditch, 106, 240.
Shottery, 134.
Shrewsbury House, 94.
— Shakespeare at, 110
Sidney, Sir Philip, 73, 228, 242.
Skelton, 223.
Smithfield, 98.
Smithfield, St. Bartholomew's, 98.
— Fair at, 214–17.
Smoking, 33–6.
Snitterfield, 135.
Somerset House, 91.
Southwark, 96.
— Fair, 217.
Spain, her navigators, 186.
— and England, 186.
Spaniards, cruelty of, 286.
Spencer, Sir John, 22.
Spencer, Edmund, 228–9.
Sports and pastimes, 250–70.
Staple Inn, 98.
Steelyard, 94, 221.
Still, Bishop, 226.
Stockings, 274, 276.
Stocks, 283.
Stour river, 148.
Stourbridge Fair, 206–14.
Stow's *Survey*, 89, 93, 96, 105, 204, 258, 264.
Strand, the, London, 88.
Stratford-on-Avon, 110–24.
— — — country round, 125–36.
Stratford, John de, 122.
Stratford, Ralph de, 122.

Stubbes, Philip, 16, 241, 253, 261, 264, 268, 302.
Suitors of the Queen, 68, 69.
Superstition, 288–301.

T

Taine on Shakespeare, 303.
Tapestry, 179.
Taylor, Robert, dramatist, 247.
Temple, the, 92.
Tennis, 259.
Thames river, 87.
Theatre, 106, 241.
— Curtain, 106, 241.
— Globe, 87, 122, 241, 245.
— Rose, 97.
Theatres, 240–5.
Thorpe, John, 167, 172, 178.
Tight-lacing, 276.
Tottel's miscellany, 233.
Tournaments, 262.
Tower of London, 95.
Trade of English merchants, 21, 22.
— and agriculture, 202–21.
Travellers, 137–45.
Tredington, 148.
Tricks at fairs, 218.
Tripoli Merchants' Company, 221.
Tudor architecture, 167–82.
Turberville, George, 224, 255.

U

Udall, Nicholas, 226.
Universities, the, 158–66.
— the effect of the Reformation on, 44.
University life, 159.
Unton, Sir H., 19.

V

Vanbrugh, Sir John, 171, 172.
Villages in Warwickshire, 126, 136.
Vineyards, 204.
Voltaire on Shakespeare, 3.

W

Wakes, 269.
Walsingham, 16, 72, 104.
Wapping, 109.
Warner, William, 230.
Warwick Castle, 114, 135, 180.
— Earls of, 114, 180.
Warwickshire, 111.
Watson, Thomas, 228
Wax images, 290.
Webster, dramatist, 246.
Weapons of soldiers, 191.
Weever, John, 230.
Wellcombe, 131.
Westminster, 88, 89.
Wharfs on the Thames, 94, 95.
Whipping-posts, 282–3.
Whips, Spanish, 286.
White Friars, 93.
Whitehall Palace, 73, 90.
Wilmcote, 126.
Wincot, 136.
Windsor, 76, 83.
Witches, 152, 153, 289–94.
Woodstock, 154.
Wool trade, 202.
Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 233.
Wychwood Forest, 154.

Y

Yeoman's house, 181.
Yeomen, the rise of, 23.
— description of, 126–8.
York House, 90.
— Miracle Plays, 233.

REFERENCES TO SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS.

King John, 5, 53.
Richard II, 7, 29, 52, 54, 57, 108.
1 *Henry IV*, 51.
Henry V, 6, 7, 8, 100, 141, 260, 283.
1 *Henry VI*, 92, 294.
2 *Henry VI*, 104, 254.
3 *Henry VI*, 7, 153.
Richard III, 8, 93, 104, 209.
Henry VIII, 14, 54, 90, 93.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 13, 111, 178, 289.
As you Like It, 21, 26, 111, 242, 247.
Merchant of Venice, 21, 63, 246.
Merry Wives of Windsor, 29, 63, 83, 102.
Love's Labour Lost, 29, 227, 253.
Hamlet, 29, 52, 259.
Romeo and Juliet, 30, 175, 256.
Winter's Tale, 51, 155, 266, 269.
All's Well that Ends Well, 51.
Twelfth Night, 52, 53.
Titus Andronicus, 63.
Timon of Athens, 63, 118, 294.
The Taming of the Shrew, 135, 256.
King Lear, 140, 261, 300.
Much Ado about Nothing, 166.
All's Well, 211, 283.
Venus and Adonis, 250.
Macbeth, 254, 294.
Othello, 256, 257.
Comedy of Errors, 261.
Cymbeline, 263.
Tempest, 265.
Antony and Cleopatra, 265.
Julius Cæsar, 300.
Troilus, 301.

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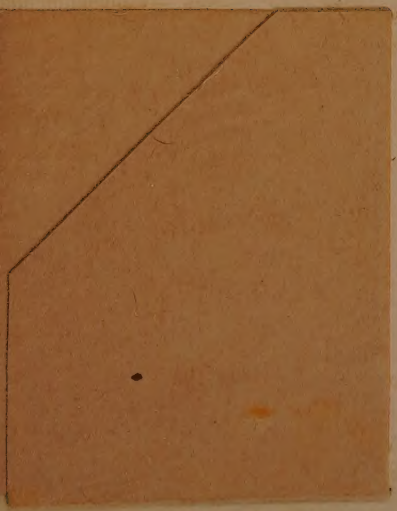
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